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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

IT'S ALL FUN AND GAMES UNTIL SOMEONE LEARNS
TO READ, THEN IT'S EDUCATIONAL:
CHILDREN'S LIBRARIANS AS
LITERACY EDUCATORS

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Louise F. Benke

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
School of Psychological Sciences
Educational Psychology

August 2019

This Dissertation by: Louise F. Benke

Entitled: *It's All Fun and Games Until Someone Learns to Read, Then It's Educational: Children's Librarians as Literacy Educators*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in College of Education and Behavioral Sciences in School of Psychological Sciences, Program of Educational Psychology

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ABSTRACT

Benke, Louise F. *It's All Fun and Games Until Someone Learns to Read, Then It's Educational: Children's Librarians as Literacy Educators*. Published Doctor of Philosophy dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 2019.

Children's librarians who emphasize making reading and libraries fun may not think of themselves as literacy educators. But, a look into the profession's past and three studies reveal both a history of overlap with literacy education in formal schools and informal learning and an overlap in the children's librarians' profession today. This dissertation presents two articles: (1) a literature review and comparative historical analysis on children's librarians' role in literacy instruction from 1876 to the end of the 20th century, and (2) a set of studies examining children's librarians' self-perceptions as literacy educators.

In the first article, events in literacy instruction in the schools are shown as corresponding with trends in library services to children. For example, the emergence of phonics instruction in the 1950s was soon followed by children's librarians resisting being called "teachers" for fear they would no longer represent reading as pleasurable. Moreover, many aspects of informal learning earmark the work of children's librarians in public libraries. Both easily align with family literacy, the information age, the importance of personal choice, and an emphasis on fun. Today, the three paths of (1) children's librarians as educators, (2) the evolution of reading instruction in the schools,

and (3) the legitimizing of informal learning are converging. Amid these historical trends, children's librarians can find new credibility and direction as literacy educators. Finally, the author discusses how the future of each path could affect the future of the children's librarian profession.

The second article in this dissertation uses three stages of research to examine children's librarians' self-perceptions as literacy educators, identify consensus, and consider influences on the future of the profession. In Stage 1 of the research, an analysis of open-ended survey responses suggested that observable change and strong feelings were associated with the topic. The majority of survey respondents were not comfortable being called teacher, with the issue of teaching roles dividing the responses into three distinct categories: comfortable with a teaching role; uncomfortable with it; and comfortable with facilitating learning, but choosing to use language other than "teach" or "teacher." In addition, 75% of the respondents felt fun was a critical component of reading and the library experience for children. Stage 2 of the research used a composite case study to examine contextual reasons for discomfort with a teaching role. Lack of preparation to teach, fears of having the same frustrations teachers face in their jobs, and the diminishing of fun were all concerns related to this discomfort. Stage 3 of the research used a multiple case study approach by interviewing children's librarians who had education-related job titles, exploring whether and how the three concerns showed up in their jobs. Results included several areas needing to be addressed by the field: (1) widespread frustration with the inadequacies of the MLS degree, (2) lack of research on the role Every Child Ready to Read plays in shaping the profession, (3) the continuation of an emphasis on fun, even when combined with learning, and (4) the importance of

informal learning for the role of children's librarians in the future. Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (1962) was used to inform the process of adapting to change in the field and emphasized the importance of maintaining core values.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Parents, educators, and legislators focus their educational concerns on ensuring children are proficient readers by the third-grade level (Fiester, 2010; Lonigan & Shanahan, 2009; No Child Left Behind, 2001; Robles, 2011). The problem is framed as one that should be addressed mainly by teachers in formal schooling (Bush, 2012; Layton, 2013; Pressley, 2002). Despite schools claiming long-term goals of helping students become *lifelong* readers (Falk & Dierking, 2002; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009), this short-term goal of proficiency by third grade is the chosen target because it is considered predictive of students graduating from high school. Meanwhile, research on the long-term goal of creating lifelong readers and true proficiency is absent (Paris, 2005; Paris & Luo, 2010; Pressley, 2002). Recently, theorists and researchers have begun to examine the impact on children becoming proficient lifelong readers through out-of-school learning (Dierking & Falk, 2003; Falk, 2005; Falk & Dierking, 2010; Gilton, 2012) and literacy environments in the home and community (Gilton, 2012; Heath, 1983; Pressley, 2002; Sénéchal & Young, 2008). As the focus on the problem widens, one particular institution's contribution is beginning to surface—that of the public library (Celano & Neuman, 2001; Celano & Neuman, 2015; Glick, 2001; Gross, 2013; Lance & Marks, 2008). In fact, literacy research on successful reading instruction strategies frequently points to the same activities children's librarians in public libraries perform

daily as part of their jobs in creating a lifelong love of reading and books (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2013; Celano & Neuman, 2001; Celano & Neuman, 2015; Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni, 2011; Krashen, 2004; Neuman, 2009). Yet, the role of children's librarians as literacy educators is unclear and rarely acknowledged. There were two purposes for this research which resulted in two articles: (1) analyze the historical (1876-2000) shift in the role of children's librarians; and (2) identify children's librarians' current self-perceptions of their literacy educator roles.

Purpose of the Study

In the first publishable article, the purpose for the comparative historical analysis undertaken was to understand the historical shifts in educational roles that occurred in the profession. This will help children's librarians position themselves more successfully in future worlds of formal and informal learning. The second publishable article presents a composite case study and interviews of library staff with education-related job titles and serves to clarify how children's librarians today perceive their roles in literacy education. The purpose was to identify the challenges and values core to the profession to assist in proactively shaping the profession as a vital educational force. Therefore, the research questions for these two studies are as follows:

Research Questions

- Q1 How do children's librarians see their role within literacy education?
- Q2 How do they feel about that role?
- Q3 Where is there obvious consensus?
- Q4 How might this influence the future of the profession?

Significance of the Study

Be careful what you wish for. . . . There is a possibility that these [educational] partnerships and initiatives might turn us into teachers, with our fates determined by a three-year-old's performance on an assessment tool. However, if public librarians do not establish a role for our libraries in the continuum of services that help children start school ready to learn, one of two things will surely happen: (1) public libraries will continue to be excluded from discussion and funding; or (2) someone else will define our role for us. And if we miss this opportunity, it will be more than just the eBook that could make public libraries an anachronism. (Reif, 2000, p. 267).

This catch-22 insight from children's librarian Kathleen Reif (2000) sent a pointed message to the profession about the crossroads to the future and speaks directly to the significance of these studies. First, understanding the history that brought the profession to this point in time and especially to its current position in education is needed to grasp today's situation. Yet, there has been very little written comparing the three paths of *formal literacy instruction*, *informal literacy learning* and *children's librarianship* and how they have evolved over time. Secondly, understanding these three elements in the landscape of today through the perspectives of children's librarians themselves will help them plan for the future of the profession. By understanding their educator roles in the past, the children's librarians today can claim the power of their educator roles today and shape them to fit with the enduring values of the profession. This is especially critical as current movements are presenting pressures and opportunities to children's librarians and compelling changes in their roles. For example,

initiatives such as Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library is shifting their primary role to that of parent educator. Public library directors such as Valerie Gross (2013) have emphasized the library's educational mission by renaming all the children's librarians in her Howard County Library system in Maryland as "instructors" and the storytimes as "classes." At this and other libraries, the position requirements are being broadened to include those with a teaching degree but without a graduate library degree. Literacy researcher Susan Neuman, in an interview for *School Library Journal* (Glick, 2001), acknowledged new expectations for children's librarians when she chided them for not explicitly teaching parents about early literacy skills as they walked together to the stacks. Through these occurrences and others, it is becoming clearer that the challenge is for children's librarians to include themselves as key players in the educational landscape (McCune, 2010), maintain their core values, and shape the future rather than simply be shaped by historical and cultural forces. Yet, very little has been written explaining how the children's librarians themselves understand their role in that landscape. These two studies will help to fill that need for careful scrutiny of a significant change in the field.

Chapter Summaries

This chapter presents the purpose and significance of these two studies. A summary of the literature review will be presented in Chapter II, with a more extensive detailed review presented in the publishable article that is Chapter IV. Correspondingly, a condensed discussion of the methodologies used in both publishable articles will be discussed in Chapter III, with the more detailed discussions in the articles themselves. Chapter IV will present the article giving a comparative historical analysis of children's librarians as literacy educators, and Chapter V will be the composite case study on

current understandings of the educator role among children's librarians. The final chapter, Chapter VI, will include an overall summary of the two studies.

CHAPTER II

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Children's Librarianship Initially Closely Aligned with Education

The two studies in chapters IV and V focus on the historical and current perceptions of educator roles for children's librarians. In this chapter, I will give a brief overview of the detailed literature review from the first publishable article (see Chapter IV) covering the period of 1876-2000. The focus will be on the historical paths of children's librarianship, formal schooling, and informal learning and how at different times, they converged or diverged. The second article on the children's librarians' self-perceptions of their educator roles today will cover the literature review for the period from 2000-2018 (see Chapter V).

Children's librarians have a long history and core value of supporting the creation of lifelong readers (Sensenig, 2011; Soltan, 2010; Walter, 2001) through pleasurable reading and library experiences. This fits well with public libraries' basic goals of providing for the lifelong learning needs of the entire community (Gilton, 2012). Initially, others saw this role as decidedly educational and alongside that of teachers (Cuban & Cuban, 2007; Dana, 1896; Walter, 2001). In the middle of the 20th Century, that role receded into the background in response to narrowing expectations on literacy instruction. This resulted in children's library services continuing to encourage reading as

pleasurable and fun, but being left out of critical discussions and the accompanying funding for solutions to reading crises dominating the educational landscape (Gross, 2013; Reif, 2000; Sensenig, 2011). Since 2000, questions about children's librarians' niche within the educational world have resurfaced on several fronts and called for there to be changes. As with many professionals when they face change, children's librarians today appear to be conflicted about their roles as teachers and unclear about the relevance of their work in the successful literacy development of young readers (Benke, 2015; Neuman & Celano, 2010; Neuman, Moland, & Celano, 2017). They are, however, in considerable agreement that their job is to create a library and reading experience for children and parents that is fun and replete with informal yet essential learning. Indeed, librarians frequently used this concept of fun to describe what they want the essential public library experience to be for children. This emphasis played out in the evolving paths of both formal and informal literacy education throughout the history of children's librarianship. Further, guarding fun in library experiences will be demonstrated in the study on children's librarians' understanding of their current role as literacy educators. Understanding these past and present roles and ongoing values through the two studies presented here will document the past and assist with planning for the future of the profession.

When public library pioneer John Cotton Dana declared in *Library Primer* (1896) that public libraries were "a center of public happiness first, of public education next" (p. 3), he expressed a sentiment that children's librarians have firmly adhered to ever since. In his seminal manual for how to create a small public library, he repeatedly aligned libraries with education and schools. Yet, the terms he used to describe the librarian's job

focused on more indirect methods of encouraging children, helping them find pleasure and enjoyment in books, and creating in them the lifelong habit of reading, rather than instructing children in specific skills. He further stipulated that public libraries should not confine their missions to formal education alone, but that they were part of a broader, non-institutionalized, community-based vision of education and culture, relaxation and refreshment (p. 38).

At that nascent point in the history of public libraries in the United States, the path of children's librarianship was well-aligned in theory and leadership to both that of formal and informal education. Since then, the general public and librarian acceptance of the profession's role in formal literacy education has been variable and occasionally contentious (Sensenig, 2011; Sensenig, 2012; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). Moreover, the profession has been relatively blasé about its role in informal learning, not calling attention to it nor particularly identifying themselves as centers of informal learning (O'Beirne, 2010). This 124-year look back begins in the middle of the 19th Century, travels through the influences of the 20th Century, and ultimately arrives at the emerging directions of the 21st Century. There are twists and turns along the route as children's librarians deviate from or align their work with formal literacy learning in the schools and also continue as a community center for informal learning. Because of this fluctuating interplay with both formal literacy instruction and informal learning, the children's librarians' path through this section of history is a distinctive one and, thus, should be considered both present within the two educational domains and as its own path.

Political and Curricular Influences on Education and Libraries in Early 20th Century

Children's services began in the late 1800s with a clear educational role accepted by formal educators and librarians (Dana, 1896; Mann, 1840; Sensenig, 2011; Walter, 2001). Teachers and children's librarians at that time each wanted to help create lifelong learners in a more targeted way than society had been doing through informal learning in the home. This was expressed in the early years as wanting to create moral and upright citizens who read only the best literature (Lopez, 1976; Mann, 1840; Smith, 2002). In the early years of the 20th Century, as behaviorism and progressivism alternated their influences, teachers were told to focus on creating the product of a graduate who could succeed in a job. Children's librarians were more freely allowed to focus on the interests of the child as they, too, worked to help children be successful in society. To accomplish their similar goals, the two professions of school teachers and children's librarians evolved and defined their varying roles in the process. This ultimately meant that the focus on issues such as direct instruction, discrete reading skills, and testing required in schools came to diverge at times from the pleasure, choice, access, and intrinsic motivation to learn that was the focus in public libraries, specifically, and in informal learning, generally. It also meant children's librarians were willing to downplay their roles as educators if that identity would threaten their commitment to reading as pleasure.

Effects of Scientifically Based Reading Instruction on Libraries in Mid-20th Century

This willingness of children's librarians to separate their roles from those of teachers was the case when, in the 1950s, reading instruction in classrooms shifted to a narrower, scientifically-based phonics approach that required strict adherence to qualified instruction in reading skills (Alexander & Fox, 2008, 2013; Ross, 2009; Sensenig, 2011;

Smith, 2002). Children's librarians who had up until then considered themselves part of the literacy education of children began to shrink from joining in the movement to make reading instruction a rigid step-by-step process and, as a result, less pleasurable. About the same time, standardized testing was also being touted as the best way to judge the effectiveness of reading instruction approaches (Kaestle, 2012). Libraries, however, did not have the prerequisites for the type of scientific research valued at the time: regular attendance by children, correlating the identities of the children with their reading performance, and a set curriculum. Thus, they could not participate in standardized tests and lacked acceptable evidence of their effectiveness (Sensenig, 2012). In 1979, Pauline Wilson spoke of this division between the two fields, claiming that considering any librarian a teacher was an "organizational fiction" utilized to create a "comforting self-image" (Wilson, 1979, p. 147). Further, she said that this tendency to identify as a teacher was a problem with academic librarians more so than with public librarians who were unlikely to make the claim of being teachers. Children's librarians in this period of their history were content to focus on their goals of creating in children a love of reading and leave the teaching and testing of reading to the schools (Hearne & Jenkins, 1999).

Learning Society, Whole Language, and Early Childhood at the End of the Century

The era of the Learning Society arriving late in the 20th Century welcomed a more global perspective and a broader view of learning than was present in the first century of schools or libraries (Falk & Dierking, 2002; Freire, 1970; Heath, 1983; Illich, 1971). This meant that schools gradually became more accepting of the importance of informal learning such as in preschool years and in family literacy. Public libraries, meanwhile, were more clearly owning their powerful place as centers of informal

learning where even if reading is purposefully fun, it is still legitimately educational. In different ways, more current research and theory on literacy were causing the two paths to overlap. A prime example of this can be found in the whole language movement.

Starting in the 1970s, whole language instructional approaches filtered into the schools. This new school of thought on literacy acquisition attributed to linguists such as Frank Smith and Kenneth Goodman centered on the whole child, while literary critics such as Louise Rosenblatt (Pearson, 2002) and Stanley Fish (1980) emphasized the importance of reader response. Whole language stressed authentic literature-based reading, comprehension, instruction relatable to the child's world, and writing as part of the process of learning to read, in opposition to basal readers, explicit instruction for the entire class in specific skills, and emphasis on spelling and grammar in writing. Further, people within this movement challenged the primacy of teaching discrete skills such as phonics, foregrounding instead other aspects of reading such as reading for meaning, reader response, and using phonics as one of several cueing systems. Many of the basic tenets of whole language aligned extremely well with the practices used in children's services in public libraries. For example, children's librarians provided children's literature trade books, instead of primers and textbooks, a variety of authentic materials greater than was possible in a classroom, and the freedom for each child to choose their own reading material. Although children's librarians for the most part did not directly learn about whole language as a literacy movement (Ross, 2009; Soltan, 2010), there was still an impact on the profession as the theory provided arguments in favor of the practices used in public libraries, and more research began to surface showing the

effectiveness of the elements underlying both whole language and children's library services.

By the end of the 20th Century, new theory and research began to appear on the effectiveness of multiple factors in learning to read such as motivation, independent reading, and reading aloud to children (Condon, 2015; Krashen, 2004; Pearson, 2002; Ross, 2009; Soltan, 2010). This gave even more support to best practices in public libraries. Meanwhile, the schools struggled under government reports that continued to restrict claims of effectiveness to only scientifically based instruction and the phonics approach in particular (Allington, 2002). On the informal learning front, the importance of early childhood, family, and community in the literacy process flourished (Gee, 2001; Gilton, 2012; Heath, 1983; Sénéchal & Young, 2008; Walter, 2001). Public libraries began to reflect this shift to an early childhood focus by labeling their missions "the preschoolers' door to learning" (Walter, 2001, p. 12). Librarians created storytimes for younger and younger ages, eventually offering programs for infants, toddlers, and their parents or caregivers (Jeffery & Mahoney, 1989) and began to target the education of parents in the process (Towey, 1990). Yet, the emphasis in the programs and in the professional literature covering them was on the learning happening for children and sometimes parents or caregivers. It was not on the role the children's librarians played in enabling that learning.

Reemergence of Educator Roles for Children's Librarians in the 21st Century

The timeframe for the comparative historical analysis featured in Chapter IV finishes at the turn of the 21st Century. This allows a manageable, yet extended, focus on the historical underpinnings of children's librarians as literacy educators that occurred

before present day. It was at the beginning of the new millennium that children's librarianship took a "sharp turn" in how public libraries serve children today (Neuman et al., 2017, p. 5). This can be attributed to the Every Child Ready to Read @Your Library initiative that took shape and rapidly spread throughout the country starting in 2001 (Ash, & Meyers, 2009). The influence that Every Child Ready to Read @Your Library exerted on children's librarianship deserves more significant attention and research than can be covered in Chapter IV. However, since its arrival, there have been a few indications that the educator role is becoming more overt. For example, in 2009, the Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC) published an update of the Core Competencies for Children's Librarians that shadowed the earlier 1999 version in not addressing the educational role that children's librarians might play (2009). For example, there is no use of the word "teach" or its derivatives, no use of the word "literacy," one use of the word "instruct," and one use of the word "education." Yet, when the document was updated in 2015 (1999), that changed significantly. Occurrences of the same words are now as follows: "teach" (0); "literacy" (1); "instruct" (1); "education" and derivatives (6); and "educators" used to refer to teachers in schools (5). Finally, there have been more recent warnings from others for children's librarians to comprehend and take a stand on their role in education before it is too late (Gross, 2013; Reif, 2000; Ross, 2009). The signs are increasing that children's librarians will be compelled to embrace their educator roles in the decades to come.

Conclusion and Chapter Summary

At the turn of the 21st Century, the three paths of *formal literacy learning*, *informal learning*, and *children's librarianship* came to a place where those traveling the

paths may not have been on the very same road, but they could more clearly see and acknowledge each other from where they were standing. Children's librarians had started on parallel paths with formal schools at the onset in 1876, with all sharing the goal of creating lifelong learners. Along the 124-year history covered here, the three paths diverged at times, often spurred by sociopolitical and curricular changes in the schools and children's librarians' unwillingness to shortchange their best-selling point—that reading and libraries are fun. Throughout, libraries continued to accept their alliance with informal learning without much fanfare, but their real worth seemed to be defined by pointing out their alignment with formal education (Sensenig, 2012). Towards the end of the century during the Learning Society there was increased emphasis on the informal learning that occurs in the first few years of life and, indeed, throughout the lifespan. Libraries began more clearly to accept their informal education roles especially for early childhood. More importantly, they began to see how formal learning and informal learning represented a narrower path on the broader road of lifelong learning and that libraries traveled alongside both.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Overview of Studies

In this chapter, I will briefly present the methodology, data collection, and analysis used for the three stages of a qualitative study of the self-perceptions of children's librarians as literacy educators. More detailed explanations of each stage can be found in Chapter V. This study was designed to move an initial understanding of the problem to one focused on the most relevant issues and finally, to their application in the field of children's librarianship of the future. The three stages to the research design are:

1. Stage 1: A basic qualitative pilot study using a survey with open-ended questions on how children's librarians perceive their role as literacy educators
2. Stage 2: A composite case study further exploring 71 responses from the Stage 1 survey, categorizing them into four groups according to their varying attitudes about teaching in their work as well as their emphasis on fun
3. Stage 3: A multiple case study using interviews with five children's librarians who have job titles or job descriptions overtly defining them as educators

In addition, I will present the framework for the study and information on the triangulation and trustworthiness of the data.

Philosophical Framework

The parameters of this study fit well with social constructivism as defined and applied by Vygotsky (1978). Creswell's summation of social constructivism included that "Multiple realities are constructed through our lived experiences and interactions with others" (Creswell, 2013, p. 36). Because of my career as a children's librarian for over 35 years, I too struggled with understanding the role I played in the education world. Like many children's librarians, I wanted only to encourage children in their learning, not to direct their studies or judge them and that often appeared to be what teachers did in the schools. However, my understanding of the educator role was markedly reconstructed and broadened when I taught pre-service teachers as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. Thus, this social constructivism methodology approach recognizes the influence of my personal experiences and informs my interpretation of the data.

In qualitative research it is common to address subjects through interviews, surveys, and case studies. Moreover, children's librarians are typically comfortable with the use of surveys in their work to gather patron evaluations of programs and services. Fink (2003) illuminated the process of shaping a study through open-ended surveys advocating for a survey's ability to examine feelings, values, and opinions of a group. She also pointed out the usefulness of this approach for moving a research topic closer to being studied through a more quantitative, closed-ended survey. Thus, by using an open-ended survey I moved this research topic closer to being able to be studied through a quantitative close-ended survey or other quantitative methods in the future.

Stage 1 Research—Qualitative Pilot Study

Step 1 Methodology

In 2015, I launched a basic qualitative study (Benke, 2015) because I wanted to understand the meaning the idea of teaching had for children's librarians. Merriam (2009) sees basic qualitative studies as useful for the purpose of understanding a phenomenon for those involved, and that data is often collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis. Thus, I posted a survey request and link to the Qualtrics online survey tool on PUBYAC (see Appendix A), the respected worldwide listserv for children and young adult librarians in public libraries. In my posting, I asked children's librarians to take an open-ended online survey on whether and how they saw themselves as literacy educators. The 26-question survey (see Appendix B) included two demographic questions asking for each respondent's age and years in the field to establish a time context in which to place the other open-ended answers. Otherwise, the questions provided ample space for responses to questions about opinions, attitudes, and experiences. I wanted to understand more about the phenomena, patterns, and themes occurring within the profession around this issue.

Stage 1 Analysis

Eighty-five responses came in within the two weeks the survey was available. A content analysis approach (Jansen, 2010) which included the significance of word and punctuation choices such as avoiding the use of the word "teach" or using exclamation points to show the intensity of feelings was applied to the total results of the survey through use of color-coding, formatting, and arranging in Word and Excel documents. For example, using a printout of all survey responses from the Qualtrics survey tool, I combed through the comments and began a list of possible themes and patterns. Next, I repeated the process and highlighted with different colors according to the themes I had

initially identified, stopping and adding to my list as more themes or even patterns of word choices become evident. On another pass through the data, I counted numbers of comments that agreed on a particular survey question to see if there was a majority of respondents that agreed. I did this repeatedly, pausing to consider if there were additional patterns I was becoming aware of. As an overall sense of what I was finding emerged, I checked my initial conclusions by going through the data again and highlighting comments that clearly gave answers to my research questions and could be used in the basic qualitative study description. Through this balancing act of analysis, open-ended coding, and re-analysis, I identified major themes and categories that answered the first three research questions of: (a) How do children's librarians see their role within literacy education?; (b) How do they feel about that role?; and (c) Where is there obvious consensus?

Stage 2 Research—Composite Case Study

Stage 2 Methodology

Following the pilot study of 85 survey responses, I initiated a composite case study to further explore the reasons for the wide disparity in comfort level with the teaching role. Creswell (2013) named composite case studies as useful in capturing the essence of an experience and how it is experienced, and this would further answer the first three research questions listed above. I hoped to be able to understand the responses in the context of the attitudes, educational background, and job experiences of the respondents. The methodology for this stage of the research was built on the methodology used in the first stage and is described in more detail in Chapter V. The qualitative pilot study was bounded by the two weeks the survey was available through

the PUBYAC listserv, by those who volunteered to take the survey, and by those who identified themselves as children's librarians, regardless of whether or not they had a master's level library degree. This next stage of the research benefitted by being bound by just those 71 that had master's degrees in library science. This helped me zero in on those who had an educational investment in librarianship and reflected the profession's recommendation for the degree in its list of competencies (ALSC, 2015).

Further, by choosing in this stage of the research to code and then group respondents according to their comfort level with teaching, the contextual information of that group could inform the issue from a combined composite case perspective. Because I had not met with or personally talked with any of the individuals, I used the data to create a composite persona for each group and termed it a *silhouette*. Finally, it became increasingly evident that an analysis of the change in the profession as seen through silhouette groups paralleled the process known as the diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 1962), whereby acceptance of an innovative change occurs differently for different groups. In both Stages 2 and 3 of the research, the purpose of this comparison to diffusion of innovation theory was to inform the implications of future research.

Stage 2 Analysis

Step 1—initial a priori coding of responses. Based on the pilot study, four a priori codes along two dimensions were identified (see Table 1). The two dimensions were (a) comfort with the role of teaching and (b) references to fun. The first dimension contained three codes: (a) comfort with the idea of teaching; (b) discomfort with the idea of teaching; and (c) comfort with the idea of enabling learning, but discomfort with the

terminology of “teaching” or “educating.” The second dimension represented the single code of fun.

Table 1

Codes Used in Data Analysis

Dimension	Code	Definition	Examples
First	Uncomfortable with teaching	Comment clearly negative about the teaching role or labels	I was drawn to working with children but was apprehensive about becoming a teacher because of the bureaucratic nightmare, the pressure to get certain results, and the pressure of being such an important person in the lives of a classroom of students. After working as the summer help for a public library, I saw that a career in libraries would give me the chance to connect with children (one of the major appeals of a career in teaching) but without many of the pressures that made me not want to be a teacher.
	Recognizing the value of teaching in job but very uncomfortable with it*	Uncomfortable with being considered teachers, as well as somewhat nervous or fearful of it, but were much milder in their espousing of fun or denouncing of teaching even though they ultimately see themselves as frequently teaching in their jobs	I think I would avoid referring to myself as a "Teacher" simply because librarians don't fit the traditional definition of "teacher" and patrons may operate under the assumption that I can teach their child how to do complex mathematics when the reality is that I depend on my calculator a lot and majored in English in college for a reason.
	Comfortable with making learning happening without using direct teaching language	Comment refers positively about children's librarian having a direct role in children learning, but avoids words like "teach" and "teacher" or "educator"	I love working with kids and their parents. Storytimes give me a chance to build relationships and share literacy tips with parents as well as interact with the kids themselves. Other programming (book clubs, craft sessions, toddler activities, Lego club, etc.) allow me to explore new ideas with kids more directly and again, it is about building relationships and giving the kids a chance to grow and develop and learn.
	Comfortable with teaching	Comment clearly and favorably includes the words "teaching" or being a "teacher" or "educator"	During storytimes, I present early literacy tips and model how to present books and songs in ways that best build pre-reading skills. I'm also teaching the kids new concepts, vocab words, songs, movements, etc.

Table 1 (continued)

Dimension	Code	Definition	Examples
Second	Fun**	References to the library or reading being fun or enjoyable, loving reading, emphasizing play, finding joy in reading, or the importance of being able to freely choose reading and activities according to personal interests.	I am NOT a teacher, and the library is NOT school--the library is a place of learning but is also fun, children should be allowed to read what they want here.
	No category assigned	Nothing in comment directly mentions teaching or learning	I've always thought children's literature is excellent and underappreciated, and I enjoy working with people in a public setting

*Not an a priori code, but emerged in the analysis.

**Responses could be coded with two colors if they reflected both a level of comfort with teaching and emphasis on fun.

Step 2—creation of initial categories for respondents. First using the teaching dimension, I color-coded all responses. Next, I tallied the number of times each color occurred for each respondent. I then grouped respondents with similar code patterns. This initially created three groups, reflecting the three comfort with teaching codes. For example, those who primarily expressed discomfort with teaching were placed in a discomfort with teaching category, etc. Further explanation of this initial coding can be seen in Table 1.

Step 3—refinement and validation of coding and segment group creation.

After sorting respondents into the three categories, I double-checked for clear consensus on the chosen teaching dimension within all comments of each respondent. If a respondent's answers were frequently focused on the tremendous amount of learning that occurred in children who visited the library, but they never referred to their own role in that learning, I made choices based on their wording and active or passive voices as to whether they were comfortable or not with teaching and coded responses accordingly.

While analyzing the discomfort with teaching category, a fourth segment emerged: recognizing the value of teaching in job, but very uncomfortable with it (see Table 1). It was very similar to the dislike teaching category, but certain respondents

could see the value of being considered teachers although still nervous or fearful about it. although the people in the dislike teaching group were openly angry or defiant, the people in this segment were decidedly milder, but still basically opposed. As is possible with case study analysis (Creswell, 2013), I named and defined this emerging category and grouped the appropriate respondents under it.

Step 4—identifying and applying the a priori code of fun throughout. The second a priori dimension identified in the pilot study was that of fun. This included references to the library or reading being fun or enjoyable, loving reading, emphasizing play, finding joy in reading, or the importance of being able to freely choose reading and activities according to personal interests. All respondents' responses were then combed for these references and color-coded as indicating an emphasis on fun in library experiences.

Step 5—create a silhouette from each teaching category. Once I felt the respondents were reliably grouped according to each of the categories within the teaching dimension, I began a separate coding process of the data and comments from each group, pulling together any data or comments deemed particularly significant and representative in content, stance, or phrasing. This process involved evaluating comments and tallying data where appropriate, ultimately resulting in a list of the most germane comments or most representative answers. This selection of data provided the basis for creating the silhouettes which I named Antoinette, Newton, Semantha, and Teagan. Every part of the silhouettes was taken from the data. An estimated 95% of each of the silhouette narratives were either quoted directly from the data by choosing those comments that succinctly summarized the group's overall feelings, or tightly tied to the data through a

paraphrasing and summarizing of all the comments. The remaining 5% that establishes the setting, was filled in from my personal experience of over 35 years knowing the day-to-day happenings in children's departments of several different public libraries. An example of this 5% would be the instance where a group of like-minded librarians go out for drinks on a Friday, or that a librarian must create a flyer while on the desk on a busy Sunday. The goal in creating silhouettes was to succinctly and colorfully capture similarity among respondents based on what they wrote. For example, "a helper sort of person with a knack for educating, but without a desire to teach in a classroom" is a quote used by one respondent in the Samantha silhouette and is used in the narrative because it describes the position of a majority of the 22 respondents. Thus, I felt confident I was only reporting out the trends that had the most consensus. To summarize, if each word or phrase in a silhouette narrative were to be bolded to indicate it was based on data, an estimated 95% of the words would be bolded. The remaining words would either be inconsequential, or an event or setting description taken from my personal understandings of the work lives of children's librarians.

Need for Further Inquiry

In the same way that an individual's beliefs and actions can be better understood within the context of their life's experiences, these silhouettes provided a way to comprehend different overall attitudes of the group. For example, Antoinette did not have much in the way of past teaching experiences or education, was angry about being forced to abandon an emphasis on fun and feared losing autonomy in how she shaped her programs. At the other end of the spectrum, Teagan had a teaching background and a no-nonsense acceptance of her teaching role, seeing it as an inevitable change for the

profession even if there was resistance by colleagues or other problems with that change. Each silhouette gave context for the reasons behind comfort or discomfort with teaching. However, this prompted more questions about the fears expressed about teaching that were present among those comfortable with teaching and those who were not. Also, all silhouettes to varying degrees expressed their commitment to keeping pleasure in library and reading experiences for children. But, those least comfortable with teaching appeared more upset about the possibility that fun could be jeopardized with an increase in teaching roles. Worries about these potential problems were so pervasive they appeared to hinder children's librarians in most of the silhouettes from totally accepting educator roles. Would these fears materialize in the children's librarian jobs of the future? Further research was needed to explore whether these possible problems could develop into actual problems in a world where children's librarians were decidedly considered educators.

Stage 3 Research—Multiple Case Study

Stage 3 Methodology

For the third stage of my research, I found the multiple case study approach most appropriate to answer the final research question of “How might this influence the future of the profession?” Creswell (2013) saw the value of multiple case studies in the different perspectives they provide for a selected issue. As a result of Stage 2 of this research, the selected issue of how children's librarians perceive their roles as educators appeared to be negatively affected by lack of experience in teaching, no preparation to teach, the threat of stressors classroom teachers face, and the jeopardizing of fun in the reading and library experience. In Stage 3 of the research, I took these themes discovered in Stage 2 and explored how they were exhibited in children's librarian jobs that were avantgarde in

being openly educational. This purposive sampling specifically addressed the final research question concerning children's librarians' roles in the future of the profession by looking into the experiences of those who are already beginning to experience a clear change in their educator roles. Thus, five children's librarians who had job titles or descriptions that proclaim their roles as educators were selected and interviewed to obtain the data for a multiple case study.

To locate children's librarians that had an education-related job title for Stage 3 of my research, I searched online, through the PUBYAC listserv (see Appendix C), at conferences, and through word of mouth and found four such children's librarians who were willing to be interviewed. Words such as "learning," "curriculum," and "instructor" were tied to their job titles and job descriptions. Pseudonyms given to these four interviewees were Irene, Nancy, Alice, and Essie. However, this assignment of pseudonyms is not meant to imply that the interviewees had one gender or another in reality. Their positions were each created in the last 5-12 years, are not common in the library world, and thus, could be considered more on the cutting edge, leading the profession into the future. Separately describing their experiences through a multiple case study could help to understand the issues that emerged in previous stages of the research as fears for the future. Did these pioneering children's librarians experience in the everyday realities of their jobs the apprehensions survey respondents had mentioned?

Last of all, I asked Hannah, a children's librarian who was named winner of a national "Teacher of the Year Award" if she would participate. Although her job title did not have a specific education-related term attached to it, her job description definitely did. Moreover, she did not have a master's degree in library studies or previous work in a

library, but she did have an advanced teaching degree and professional background as a teacher. Hannah now worked in a public library in a position that others—including those who gave her the award at a national literacy conference—would automatically consider to be that of a “children’s librarian.” It occurred to me that the very path Hannah traveled to be in that position and be named “Teacher of the Year” might both align and contrast with the paths of the four other education-related children’s librarians and reveal a critical angle on the issues of children’s librarians as literacy educators.

The five interviewees—Hannah, Irene, Nancy, Alice, and Essie—took the same survey that the 71 respondents had. I then interviewed them each by phone for approximately 45 minutes using a semi-structured interview style and 27 questions (see Appendix D). Because there would not be the usual visual and physical features of a case study approach, I began by asking each interviewee to describe their surroundings. Those comments assisted in establishing a mood and personality for each of the interviewees. I took notes during the interview and recorded and transcribed the interviews.

Stage 3—Data Analysis

The five interviews were then coded and analyzed for recurring themes and patterns. The five additional survey responses were likewise coded and analyzed using the same categories as had been used with the previous 71 survey respondents. According to Creswell (2013, p. 101), in analyzing a multiple case study, a typical approach is to first present a description of each case, then present a thematic analysis across cases. Correspondingly, the descriptions in Chapter V introduce the interviewees and place them within the context of their personal journeys with issues most specific to them also discussed. I then followed with a discussion of additional themes that are present across most of the cases. These themes relate back to the issues expressed by both the 71 survey

respondents and the silhouettes and give a perspective of whether teaching-related problems could develop into actual problems in a world where children's librarians are decidedly educators.

Trustworthiness and Triangulation

To establish trustworthiness of the findings for this case study (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009), several measures were employed. First, each of the interviewees were asked to member check the findings. All five responded and their requested changes were then incorporated into the case study. Next, keyword searches using Academic Search Premier from 2005-2015, the 10 years preceding the survey, were conducted on *Children and Libraries*, the primary journal of the profession as well as searches throughout the professional literature for clear acceptance of teaching roles in children's librarians. No significant articles were found other than the ECRR evaluation reports, which revealed shifts in attitudes toward teaching. In addition, a combination of real-world experiences and an examination of the changes in the ALSC competencies list revealed a profession in the midst of a change in educator roles. This aggregate of member-checking, triangulating artifacts, and real-world instances served to further vouch for the assessment that children's librarians' perception of their educator roles is one that many embrace, but a sizable number still resist for reasons identified in this research.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented an overview of the types of qualitative methodology that were applied to this research: basic qualitative study, composite case study, and multiple case study. Since this study involved three stages of research, I presented the design, data collection, and analysis for each. In addition, I offered points on the

triangulation and trustworthiness of the study. Further details and discussion of this methodology are included in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

IT'S ALL FUN AND GAMES UNTIL SOMEONE LEARNS TO READ, THEN IT'S EDUCATIONAL: CHILDREN'S LIBRARIANS AS LITERACY EDUCATORS

Abstract

Children's librarians who emphasize making reading and libraries fun may not think of themselves as literacy educators. But, a look into the profession's past reveals a history of overlap with literacy education in formal schools and informal learning. This article presents a literature review and comparative historical analysis on children's librarians' role in literacy instruction from 1876 to the end of the 20th Century. The significance of events such as the emergence of phonics instruction in the 1950s and the later popularity of whole language correspond with events in the provision of library services to children such as resistance to it being considered "teaching" and the persistent emphasis on reading for pleasure. Moreover, the growth of informal learning in literacy in recent years as a result of new theories about social-cultural influence, family literacy, situated learning, and the knowledge expansion of the information age agrees with the focus on early childhood, freedom of choice, and emphasis on fun that earmarks the work of children's librarians in public libraries. Today, the three paths of (1) children's librarians as educators, (2) the evolution of reading instruction in the schools, and (3) the legitimizing of informal learning are converging. Amid these historical trends, children's

librarians can find new credibility and direction as literacy educators. Finally, the author discusses how the future of each path could affect the future of the children's librarian profession.

Introduction

When public library pioneer John Cotton Dana declared in *Library Primer* (1896) that public libraries were “a center of public happiness first, of public education next” (p. 3), he expressed a sentiment that children's librarians have firmly adhered to ever since. In his seminal manual for how to create a small public library, he repeatedly aligned libraries with education and schools, calling the children visiting the library “pupils,” the librarian a “teacher,” and the overall library itself “the people's common school” (p. 35) and a “school for the young” (p. 4). Yet, the terms he used to describe the librarian's job focused on more indirect methods of encouraging children, helping them find pleasure and enjoyment in books, and creating in them the lifelong habit of reading rather than instructing children in specific skills. He further stipulated that public libraries should not confine their missions to formal education alone, but that they were part of a larger, non-institutionalized, community-based vision of education (p. 38).

At that nascent point in the history of public libraries in the United States, the path of children's librarianship was well aligned in theory and leadership to both that of formal and informal education. Since then, the general public and librarian acceptance of the profession's role in formal literacy education has been variable and occasionally contentious (Sensenig, 2011; Sensenig, 2012; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009) and relatively blasé about their role in informal learning. This look back with an onset in the middle of the 19th Century starts a journey for children's librarianship that travels through the

influences of the 20th Century and arrives at the emerging directions of the 21st Century. There are twists and turns along the route of children's librarians as they deviate from or align their work with formal literacy learning.

Meanwhile, their relationship with informal literacy is less celebrated. Public libraries continuously, albeit unobtrusively, maintain their role as providing informal learning throughout their history. However, sometimes public libraries are seen as the clear front runner of informal learning within a community, and sometimes they are seen as only one type of informal learning. Because of this fluctuating interplay with both formal literacy instruction and informal learning, the children's librarians' path through this section of history is a distinctive one, even as it shares the road with the other larger domains.

Does this path already traveled by children's librarians signify possibilities for the road ahead? Does it foresee that the profession's role in overall literacy education will be clear and assured? Or, does it foreshadow detours away from the traditional values of the profession by allowing formal schooling to dictate the directions? The following literature review maps these changes and provides opportunities to assess them from a long-distanced perspective.

Overview

With a career in children's librarianship that spans over 40 years, I personally experienced many of the twists and turns of the 124 years—1876-2000—surveyed here. Taking this perspective of a long journey through time has allowed certain trends and motifs to come forward as particularly significant in bringing the profession to the point it is today. To be sure, there are certain motifs that were present at the onset of public

libraries in 1876 that, surprisingly, are every bit as vital today. For example, the quote cited above of pioneer librarian John Cotton Dana in 1896 captured the essence of the emerging field in stating libraries are “a center of public happiness first, of public education next” (p. 3). Horace Mann, founder of the common school late in the 19th Century and a librarian himself (Hinsdale, 1898), likewise embodied the true spirit of librarianship with his commitment to school libraries, public libraries, and, most especially, children reading for pleasure. The earliest children’s librarians late in the 19th Century were encouraged by society to consider their roles as educators of the spiritual, cultural souls of children and, thus, to prevent young readers from reading anything less than the best moral-enhancing books of the canon of children’s literature (Lopez, 1976). In small but growing ways, those early children’s librarians also valued finding “the right book for the right child at the right time” an oft-repeated slogan first expressed in 1902 by early children’s librarian Anne Carroll Moore (as cited in Walter, 2001, p. 29). Thus, they crossed borders into the less-than-esteemed children’s books in order to find that perfect match that would encourage children to love reading and become lifelong readers. Likewise, the very earliest focus on programming in children’s libraries was grounded in the premise that storytelling, storytimes, and an expanding list of colorful programming would promote the circulation of books and, thus, reading—as it does today (Lopez, 1976). Less comforting to me was the realization that classroom teachers and children’s librarians struggled in the early years to create smooth collaborations, despite their clear agreement that they were partners in creating an educated society (Powell, 1917). So it has been since. In those beginning years of school and public library cooperation it also became clear that classroom teachers were and are still not clear what is occurring in

public libraries. And, children's librarians' understanding of the classroom and the curriculum was and is still, likewise, clouded.

What happened in the schools and in the teaching of reading over the last century has greatly affected public libraries. For example, in the 1950s the tenacious hold of phonics over literacy instruction as a scientifically based, one-best-way method can be considered a turning point in children's librarians' role as literacy educators. This was not because children's librarians changed how they encouraged young readers, but because the widely established phonics approach did not especially endear children to reading or promote the circulation of books. Thus, children's librarians began to emphasize even more the attractive and fun aspects of reading and willingly disassociated themselves from being dubbed teachers. Throughout the latter half of the 20th Century, children's services struggled with funding, but ultimately were popular with the public (Benton Foundation, 1996). Even the emphasis in public libraries since the 1970s on the different formats technology offered such as musical recordings, videos, video gaming, and computer use served to cement the library as a place for fun for young *and* old (Cuban & Cuban, 2007; Gilton, 2012; Heaviside & Farris, 1995). And, when technology came to be seen as threatening the very existence of public libraries, children's services and their standby of storytime were still considered sacrosanct by the public (Benton Foundation, 1996). It wasn't, however, until close to the end of the century that children's librarians began to understand that their storytimes and other approaches to encouraging reading were much more than simply "fun" ways to get preschool children excited about books and used to a group experience. They began to see how clearly their jobs aligned with the research into best literacy instruction in classrooms (Reif, 2000). The effects of the whole

language reform that swept American schools in the '70s serves as one example. Whole language emphasized the reading of authentic literature as the path to learning to read and challenged the primacy of teaching discrete skills such as phonics (Pearson, 2002). As a result, for a brief period, classrooms became in effect more like public libraries, and children's librarians' expertise in children's literature was seen as more relevant to how children learn to read. In the '80s and '90s early brain development research blossomed (Tokuhamma-Espinosa, 2011a), and educators turned to the importance of early childhood (Roskos & Vukelich, 2006). Preschool storytimes found in public libraries were touted as examples of best practices for preparing children to read (Celano & Neuman, 2001, 2015). Children's librarians began to realize research was validating their role, especially in working with preschoolers, and they began to demand a place at the table as funding for education was being discussed (Durrance & Fisher, 2003; Reif, 2000). They began collaborating with other educators in significant ways, making their work more research-based and applicable for use with parents. They began, once again, to claim their rightful role in literacy education, both as it occurred in formal education and how it took place in the informal learning that occurs before a child ever attends school.

By the close of the 20th Century the three paths of literacy education in the schools, literacy education in public libraries, and informal literacy learning had not joined, but they were as close as they had ever been since the beginning of the 124-year history of children's librarianship in America in 1876. By 2000, all three were headed in the same direction with informal learning presenting the most enjoyable trip on the most expansive freeway with the most possibilities for growth—if it could garner reliable and sufficient funding. Formal education continued to struggle with the twists and turns of

reforms brought about through government legislation such as No Child Left Behind (2001) and the slowdowns caused by construction of new standards. But, it is perhaps a testament to the commonsense and research base of whole language that it remained in the landscape of literacy instruction even after it fell out of favor in the late 1990s (Cassidy, Ortlieb, & Grote-Garcia, 2016; Martinez & McGee, 2000). Even with continuing efforts to emphasize discrete skills, phonics, explicit instruction, and basal reading programs in the classroom, there were still many educators writing about another approach to literacy instruction. As these educators wrote about best practices, the future of education, and the importance of motivation in learning, they maintained the importance of the so-called “balanced instruction” approach that is *sub rosa* tied to whole language and related to literacy found in public libraries (Cassidy et al., 2016; Ross, 2009).

With the ease of finding information on the Internet by the year 2000 threatening the very existence of public libraries, this institution proved it can travel securely into the future as long as library leaders are willing to continually reinvent the institution to meet the needs of the community. This is true for children’s librarianship as well. As parents asked libraries to help their children become readers, that is what libraries began to do, and they are proving they can do it while straddling the two paths of formal learning and informal learning and using fun as a way to entice children to travel with them. After all, both types of learning—formal and informal—are necessary as part of the infrastructure of education in our current learning society. After all, each child is different, and no one approach to learning to become a proficient, lifelong reader works well for every student.

The following journey through public library history in the United States up until the year 2000 traces several key factors as they are displayed on each of the three paths. The goal of creating lifelong readers and learners, for example, is clearly shared by formal educators, informal educators, and children's librarians alike. The perceptions of the professional roles in each field reflect how the professions varied throughout time. The role of motivation in each approach to literacy learning, especially the role of fun and choice, significantly separates the three paths at different times. Finally, how each approach to literacy learning is evaluated and justified draws distinct routes that spread apart the most and have much to predict about the future of both the three paths and literacy learning itself.

Parallels in Concepts but Differences In Terminologies for Each Path

To assist in the discussion of these three different pathways—formal literacy education, informal literacy learning, and literacy learning at the public library—an examination of the terminologies used in each is necessary. These terminologies sometimes reveal overlaps in concepts and sometimes the distinctions in how they are manifested on each pathway. For example, omnipresent in the history of children's services has been a solid commitment on the part of children's librarians to help children read for pleasure and thus attain the goal of becoming lifelong readers and learners (Hearne & Jenkins, 1999; Long, 1969). This solid commitment is at times seen as nudging the library away from the formal literacy learning path which does not espouse pleasure as significantly (Powell, 1917; Sensenig, 2011) and at times as squarely placing libraries on the much wider road of informal, lifelong literacy learning instead (Dana, 1896; Gilton, 2012; O'Beirne, 2010; Sullivan, 2005; Wiegand, 2009). All three of these

paths—public library children’s services, formal schooling, and informal learning experiences—necessitate definitions of key concepts: what constitutes informal learning, how are motivational factors, especially fun, termed in each area, how the professions each relate to the role of being the *more knowledgeable other* (McLeod, 2014) in literacy learning, and how each area defines their overall goals.

Elements and definitions of informal learning vary over time and location.

Addressing the history of informal learning would not be complete without an overview of the variety of terms used to define it in the last century. A teacher and youth worker in England, Josephine Macalister Brew, first directed attention to informal learning when she wrote *Informal Education* (1946) and described the parameters of working with youth outside schools to help them with the learning they wanted for themselves. She provided an early and complete framework for the significance of informal learning, including its emphasis on choice, flexibility, and individual interests (Smith, 2001a). Since then, British educators used the term *nonformal learning* to describe only the type of experiences found in libraries and museums or in community centers. They also used *informal learning*, but it referred specifically to learning within the home and everyday life (Smith, 2001b). Thus began a fluctuation of terms that has yet to be clarified. Some refer to *informal education* by describing it as one of components in the educational infrastructure of society: formal education, informal education, home education, and work education—all working together to educate citizens (Falk, 2005; Falk & Sheppard, 2006; Labelle, 1982). A simpler distinction frequently used is between the education provided in schools (i.e., formal education) and education provided outside of schools (i.e., informal education). Variations on this dichotomy allow that education also happens

within the home (e.g., informal education, family literacy, or community literacy) or when people choose to learn something on their own (informal learning, nonformal learning, free-choice learning, self-directed learning, hobby learning, out-of-school learning—even lifelong learning) (Falk, 2005). Indeed, informal learning is based on the idea that individuals instinctively want to learn and enjoy learning (McCombs, 1991). For the purposes of this study which is focused on the United States, the term *informal learning* will be used in the broadest sense to mean all learning outside of school.

A key aspect of informal learning is how pervasive it is. Formal schooling only accounts for a portion of the day, a portion of the year, and a portion of childhood in a citizen's entire life. Informal learning can happen before official entry into school, outside of the school day, after graduation, and even within the school day as well as throughout life. Informal learning can intersect with home and family life more easily than formal learning and frequently involves the family members in the process of learning. Finally, leading informal learning researchers Falk and Dierking (2010) claimed that formal schooling takes up but 5% of an individual's entire lifetime.

Some definitions of informal learning focus on location. Some focus on choice or control and on the flexibility or lack of structure therein (Lemke, Locusay, Cole, & Michalchik, 2015). Some focus on the inclusion of fun, pleasure, or enjoyment (Eshach, 2007; Lemke et al., 2015). Perhaps it is helpful to list different common elements of informal learning to circumscribe its meaning. In addition to the descriptors already listed—choice, flexibility, enjoyment, and location— informal learning is highly personal, respectful of individual approaches to learning, and highly relevant to the learner (Dierking & Falk, 2003; Eshach, 2007; Falk, 2005; Falk & Dierking, 2010;

Labelle, 1982; Smith, 2001b). It is regularly transformative (Falk & Sheppard, 2006; Lemke et al., 2015; Putman & Walker, 2010). It is more broadly connected to the social environment and leisure activities (Falk & Dierking, 2010). Time constraints are also more flexible (Lemke et al., 2015). For example, informal learning often happens on demand and at any stage of life. Further, informal learning tends to be short-termed and episodic (Falk & Heimlich, 2009). These definitions and descriptors ordinarily apply to experiences in community centers such as museums, parks, recreation centers, and public libraries. Thus, public libraries throughout their history have been considered both places of informal learning and educational institutions.

To finish accurately defining informal learning, it is important to list what it is not as well. First and foremost, many proclaim it is *not* like school (Falk & Dierking, 2010). Informal learning is often touted as being better and more appealing to children and youth precisely because it is not like school. For Christine Van Winkle (2014), one aspect of this is that there is little risk of failure in informal learning. Others described traditional schooling as a linear gathering of knowledge that is top-down and decided by the institution (Falk, 2005; Falk & Sheppard, 2006); they see free-choice learning as based on the individual's choices and personal responsibility for learning, something which McCombs (1991) agrees is not underlying formal education. Bekerman, Burbules and Silberman-Keller (2006) suggested informal learning is defined by the lack of an externally imposed curriculum. Informal education is bottom-up and not based on mass-produced curricula often found in formal educational institutions (Falk, 2005, p. 272). Gilton (2012) also pointed out that formal learning is chronological, graded, and hierarchical—aspects which are rarely part of informal learning. As one learner described

the difference, in school he is apt to go in straight lines, but with informal learning he wanders (O'Beirne, 2010, p. 14). Moreover, intrinsic motivation to learn is considered present in almost all informal learning, whereas it is by no means a given in formal schooling (Brophy, 2010; Dierking & Falk, 2003; Eshach, 2007; Falk, 2005; Falk & Sheppard, 2006). Indeed, the different kinds of motivation present in literacy learning on each of the three paths helps to distinguish between them.

Motivation factors bridge parallel issues on the three paths. Much attention has been paid to how motivation affects both formal and informal learning (Gambrell, 2002) even though government-sponsored reforms such as the more recent Common Core State Standards (CCSS) often appear to ignore it (Barab, Arici, & Jackson, 2005; Cassidy et al., 2016; Morrow & Gambrell, 2015; Putman & Walker, 2010). Educators consider motivation central to the learning process since motivation can help or hinder learning (Ardoin, 2009) and can support learners when they need commitment to learning in order to overcome challenges (Fink, 2000). In literacy particularly, experts agree motivation plays a significant role (Alexander & Fox, 2013; Flippo, 2001). One researcher, Barbara McCombs (1991), saw motivation as virtually indistinguishable from lifelong learning. This is echoed by other researchers that found motivation is closely entwined with engagement, choice, ownership, and a growth mindset or the belief the individual holds that they can succeed (Dweck, 2006). One dichotomy in types of motivation commonly discussed is the difference between intrinsic motivation (learning that comes from within the learner because of enjoyment or personal satisfaction) and extrinsic motivation (learning that comes from outside the learner such as grades, money, prizes, or praise) (Gambrell, 2002). Falk and Dierking (2002) are decided in their choice

of the term *free-choice learning* for informal learning because the title captures the essence of the motivation behind informal learning—intrinsic motivation through choice, control, and interest of the learner.

Specifically, intrinsic motivation covers the type of motivation associated with success in literacy learning in all three arenas: schools, informal learning venues, and public libraries. The construct of intrinsic motivation originally appeared as a reaction to the behaviorist theories that motivation was only a matter of stimulus-response (Ford, 1992). Ultimately, psychology researchers Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci (2000) reported that they adapted the construct of intrinsic motivation as it was originally presented by others such as Harry Harlow, Robert White and Richard de Charms (as cited in Bembenutty, 2015) with a nod to earlier work by Csikszentmihalyi and Rathunde (1993) and Ryan (1995) himself within the larger framework of self-determination theory (SDT). Ryan and Deci (2000) explained:

The construct of intrinsic motivation describes this natural inclination toward assimilation, mastery, spontaneous interest, and exploration that is so essential to cognitive and social development and that represents a principal source of enjoyment and vitality throughout life. (p. 70)

Edward Deci, Richard Koestner, and Richard Ryan note that extrinsic rewards are the “currency of schools” (2001, p. 1) and are commonly used in the classroom. Further, their meta-analysis, *Extrinsic Rewards and Intrinsic Motivation: Reconsidered Once Again*, repeats their original challenge that extrinsic rewards may, indeed, undermine effects of learning in most cases (2001). Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett (1973) found that, because of the possibility of reducing intrinsic motivation at the very least extrinsic

motivation should be used in limited ways. Meanwhile, other researchers agree with Deci et al. (2001) on the importance of intrinsic motivation, adding that intrinsically motivated readers read more deeply and comprehend more than do extrinsically motivated readers (Allington, 2012; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014). Gambrell (2002) believed that the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards is more complex than current research has yet captured, with research now revealing that there is a spectrum of motivations ranging from solely extrinsic to solely intrinsic and that certain combinations of types of motivation are more effective than others. Still, this current assessment of what works with motivation may help to clarify that a significant difference between informal learning and formal learning is the powerful role of intrinsic motivation and that the interest of the learner is found in all informal learning. Indeed, the reliance on intrinsic motivation for literacy is particularly appropriate since the goal is to produce a lifelong reader—one who continually motivates him or herself to read. One key application of intrinsic motivation application that is used extensively by informal educators and most especially by children’s librarians is that deceptively simple idea of motivating learners through fun.

Fun—a plain word for an academically valid type of motivation. It is challenging to assign precise academic terminology to a word that is widely used to describe both informal learning and experiences in public libraries. That word is *fun*. Throughout their history, children’s librarians have persisted in placing enjoyment as central to the library and reading experience. A survey of the last 10 years of articles in the profession’s journal, *Children and Libraries*, as well as examination of comments by children’s librarians in my recent survey of children’s librarians (Benke, 2015) revealed

that words such as *fun*, *pleasure*, *enjoyment*, *choice*, *play*, *games*, and even *joy* and *happiness* are commonly used when children's librarians describe strategies for engaging young patrons with books and the library. When those same motivational strategies that children's librarians might label as fun are applied in the classroom to help students become proficient readers, the terms used in educational articles are more likely to be *engagement*, *autonomy*, *social interaction*, *intrinsic incentives* and *flow*. Further, when motivation to read in school is studied, it is frequently associated with the broad term *independent reading* or reading based on *choice* or *self-selection* and *enjoyment*—the very same forces underlying a child's use of the public library collection. Well-known literacy researcher, Stephen Krashen, (2004) terms reading for fun as *free voluntary reading* or FVR. Therefore, when children's librarians—or teachers—designate something as *fun*, it is frequently a more conversational, less-academic way of saying that they are trying to motivate children to participate in free voluntary reading which has been repeatedly connected to becoming a lifelong reader (Bridges, 2014; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014). Sensenig provided an example how this definition of fun in the library setting can vary. He observed how children “engaged” while in library storytimes and saw their engagement as synonymous with “fun.” But, Sensenig further defined it as “paying attention, responding, [and] later reenacting” with puppets (2012, p. 105).

Informal learning educators also frequently tie enjoyment into their descriptions of informal learning, stating at times that, at the minimum, pleasure and learning are not mutually exclusive (Falk & Dierking, 2002). There has even been the creation of a new word of *edutainment* for the blend of learning and fun (Eshach, 2007; Lemke et al., 2015). At the other end of the spectrum some supporters of informal learning claim the

enjoyment of informal learning is essential to the experience (Barab et al., 2005). These researchers supported this belief with the fact that Vygotsky saw the learning of language skills by children as play, but that as children learn more formally in school, it is considered work and as something that must be dispensed with before there can be play outside.

Fun is clearly used as a primary motivator by children's librarians. According to the literature on informal learning, the generic informal learning educator is not far behind in placing enjoyment as core to informal learning experiences. In schools, teachers are less likely to regularly use enjoyment as the primary motivator (Simmons, 1991) and, when it is, it is frequently defined in more academic terms such as *engagement, autonomy, social interaction, intrinsic incentives* and *flow* such as that which occurs when children are reading independently. However, practitioners on all three paths are coming from a concept of the significance of their professional role which, like motivation, also plays a role in the success of the student's learning.

The “more knowledgeable other” is present but distinct on each of the paths.

The educator's role within formal schools is fairly straightforward. Learning is frequently seen as happening because of the direct actions of *teachers teaching*, and there is free use of both of those terms. Meanwhile, this same titling of educators and their actions varies for the informal learning arena. Since the 1950s, informal learners were seen as turning to *knowledgeable adults* or *informal educators* for their learning (Cunningham, 2009; Falk, 2005; Tal & Morag, 2007) or succeeding in learning without them (Eshach, 2007; Falk, 2005; Illich, 1971). In professional articles about informal learning, the word *teach* is only occasionally used (Falk & Sheppard, 2006). This omission of terminology related to

teaching might be expected since the greater emphasis in informal learning is on being autonomous and finding enjoyment and engagement in learning experiences through one's own efforts (Barab et al., 2005; Falk, 2005; Falk & Dierking, 2002; Illich, 1971). More will be discussed later about how certain educational theorists such as Ivan Illich refuted any need for professional teachers in or out of schools. Finally, according to my earlier research (Benke, 2015), there is yet another set of terms applied to the education occurring in children's rooms of public libraries. The *learning* and *development* that happens as children or their parents *engage* in literacy in public library settings is described in articles from the last 10 years of the profession's journal, *Children and Libraries*, as materializing with the assistance of children's librarians who *promote*, *share*, and, occasionally *educate* as they present programs or provide services. Indeed, I found from surveying children's librarians that they are frequently tentative about being called the generic term of *educator* and even more reluctant to be called a *teacher* (Benke, 2015).

Whether called a teacher, an educator, or a librarian, the role of the more experienced or knowledgeable adult helping children learn is present in each of these three arenas and aligns well with Vygotsky's concept of how children learn (Bruner, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978). His theory will form the basis for the definition of a teacher in this work. Included in it is Barbara Rogoff's (1991) expansion on these concepts: she similarly saw the teaching role as a more informal adjusting of the environment and interactions to provide guided participation and support for learning (Barron & Bell, 2016). Finally, as motivation is utilized to help reach a specific destination, and the more knowledgeable other is also employed to help the learner complete an educational

journey, it is the goals of each path that define the destination of the journeys. Are all three paths headed toward the same goal? And, is that goal described in the same manner?

Goals for all three paths are basically the same but assessing them differs.

Formal learning, informal learning, and public library children's services agree consistently on the end goal of children becoming lifelong readers and learners (Falk & Dierking, 2002; LaBelle, 1982; McCombs, 1991; Pacios, 2007; Tuijnman & Boström, 2002; Witteveen, 2017). At the beginning of their histories in America, schools and public libraries further agreed on the goal of creating moral and upright citizens (Lopez, 1976; Mann, 1840; Smith, 2002). However, having the same goal is very different from how it can be known that the goal has been reached. Assessment varies for each domain. Briefly, within schools, standardized tests, frequently tied to third-grade reading proficiency, are seen as predicting whether the end goal of reading as an adult will be reached (Fiester, 2010). For informal learning, assessment is only recently being developed and is less clearly defined. Because the goal of informal learning is determined to be a lifelong venture of becoming a happier, more fulfilled person, reaching that goal is determined by the individual learner's self-assessment of the experience, something that is virtually impossible to compare across groups and experiences (Lemke et al., 2015). For public libraries, assessment is even more elusive, with early library leaders claiming it is found in efficiently bringing in more users for each dollar spent on the collection or programs (Cuban & Cuban, 2007; Wiegand, 2009), and later library leaders translating that same idea into *return on investment* (ROI) of each dollar spent on libraries (Holt & Elliott, 2003). Indeed, some comment that the public library can claim

they have succeeded in their goals simply because users keep coming back (Gilton, 2012).

This delineation of constructs and their alignment with common terms is essential as the history of these three paths to lifelong learning and literacy are mapped from the middle of the 19th Century to the present. Many irregular intersections and alignments are part of these three histories, perhaps predictive of the future, and thus necessary to define clearly. The following historical overview from 1840-2000 will track the recurring significance of the shared goals of lifelong reading and learning, the different professions' perception of their role as educators, and the relative importance of intrinsic motivation factors such as fun and choice for each of the three paths using the understandings of terms presented here.

1840-1914—Trailhead of Three Paths

When the journey of public schools and public libraries began in the middle of the 19th century, they first built on what informal learning had provided in the way of literacy instruction. Next, these two public institutions began to develop as true institutions underpinned with the prevalent philosophies such as behaviorism and progressivism. They were supported by the public—schools through taxes and public libraries by a slighter, more fragile combination of taxes and private donations. Despite agreeing at the outset on goals of lifelong reading and learning, each institution developed particular approaches to the creation of readers. Schools emphasized direct instruction in skills. Public libraries emphasized self-selection of pleasure reading of the finest literature. Meanwhile, the growth of the country put pressure on these two institutions and their associated professions with differing results. The growth of the

publishing industry, in particular, shaped how teachers taught, but the publishing companies themselves were shaped by how children's librarians reviewed books. Likewise, the use of storytelling by children's librarians shaped how those professionals expressed their educator roles differently than did teachers. Ultimately, by the time the 20th Century began, public libraries were able to maintain their very democratic but more tenuous claim to support because of citizens choosing to use them. But because of their fewer numbers and slighter funding, they were moved into a secondary status as educators along with the other more informal educational sources such as museums and the home (Cremin, 1980; Wiegand, 2009). Meanwhile, by the end of this period, public schools had claimed dominance in education and, specifically, in the teaching of reading (Venezky & Kaestle, 2009).

Learning to read initially provided through informal learning. It is hard to imagine an America without the schools, public libraries, and multiple opportunities for informal learning that help children today learn to read. Yet, in America's first 100 years, schools were scarce, and public libraries were non-existent. Literacy learning, where it happened, occurred informally. Before 1840, Americans mostly learned how to read at home often using the family Bible and a variety of methods that frequently emphasized storytelling and fun, but also sometimes emphasized a strict direct instructional approach (Arizpe & Styles, 2011). In addition, there were occasional schools, many of them religiously affiliated or community sponsored (Jeynes, 2007; Smith, 2002).

Proliferation of formal schools sanctions certain ways of teaching literacy. With the growth of the nation, citizens were beginning to value and need a more structured and consistent approach to education. Indeed, parents began to be discouraged

from teaching their own children (Arizpe & Styles, 2011). In 1837, Horace Mann, an ambitious educational reformer, led the country in the establishment of more standardized education by creating common schools in Massachusetts and then beyond (Jeynes, 2007; Long, 1969; Smith, 2002). The history of formal literacy instruction continued forward. Literacy historian Nila Blanton Smith (2002) traced the textbooks of reading instruction between 1776 and 1840. She found reading instruction in schools focused on nationalism and bringing the country together through a unified approach to language. Early spellers and readers such as Webster's blue-backed speller emphasized the laborious learning of each letter of the alphabet first. Then, as actual reading began, proper pronunciation and elocutionary skills were primary. It was, at that time, all about oral reading according to Smith. Indeed, silent reading was not yet considered a commonly accepted way to read, much less an effective way to learn to read until the 1920s (Hiebert & Reutzel, 2010; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). In addition, the early instructional aids of spellers and readers continued to focus on virtue and moral behavior, but more for the purpose of creating good citizens and a unified country than the previous goal of teaching the Bible and saving souls (Smith, 2002). Periodically, there would be a nod towards making reading instruction interesting or connected to everyday life, but a clear emphasis on making it fun was absent in early textbooks with mentions of rules, memorization, and the drudgery of learning to read more common (Powell, 1917; Smith, 2002).

Informal and formal education paved the way for public libraries. It was the Sunday School movement started in 1785 that proved in some ways successful in providing both an informal education and free reading material for children before schools or public libraries were widely established (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976; Powell,

1917). Moreover, because compulsory education was established in only 31 states by 1900 and not in all of America until 1918, (Cremin, 1961; Jeynes, 2007), many children did not attend school. Indeed, many were in the labor force working six days a week (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976; Powell, 1917). In an effort to reduce crime and illiteracy, Sunday Schools provided both free education and free access to books. Not all saw this service as tremendously valuable. Some saw the books that were provided as “namby-pamby literature that revolted the children” (Are juvenile libraries desirable?, 1908, p. 478) and some commented disparagingly about the offerings admitting the value was merely that, at least, the children were reading (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976; Powell, 1917).

Library historian, Manuel D. Lopez, (1976) provided a thorough overview of the development of libraries for children in these earliest days showing initial growth as the result of emerging yet inconsistent governmental support for education. As it became more prevalent for towns and cities to establish schools, public libraries also began to appear as part of the community’s plan to create a literate citizenry. Governments appropriated money for libraries to be established in schools but gave little thought to maintaining those libraries or ensuring that the appropriated money was spent on the library, rather than on wages or other school expenses (Gilton, 2012; Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976). In addition, teacher training in the mid-19th Century did not require that teachers be well-read or able to recommend books to their students (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976; Powell, 1917). As a result, those early school libraries quickly fell into disrepair and disuse making public libraries the longer lasting option for the general public (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976). Regardless, those early school libraries helped pave the way: the governments that funded them established that tax money should support libraries. In

addition, the Sunday School movement helped introduce the idea that children should have free access to reading materials (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976; Sensenig, 2012). Meanwhile, a few museums had also sprung up around the turn of the 20th Century, and their offerings in informal learning were sometimes in conjunction with libraries, including one museum started by library pioneer John Cotton Dana in Newark, New Jersey in 1909 (Given & McTavish, 2010; Martens & Latham, 2016). Within this landscape, informal learning opportunities were clearly present, but the concern over boundaries between informal learning and formal schooling was not yet a volatile issue.

By the middle of the 19th Century, informal literacy learning in the home continued, but new directions were set for public schools and public library service to children (Long, 1969; Powell, 1917; Sensenig, 2011). In fact, school attendance had become compulsory, and children's services in public libraries became so well established that as early as 1906, juvenile circulation in large cities represented 31% of the library's entire circulation of books (Long, 1969).

Varying emphases on pleasure reading bisects schools and public libraries.

American schools in the 19th Century looked very different than they do today. According to Cremin (1961), they were open only a few months each year, located mainly in towns and cities large enough to support a school and attended mainly by boys who were not already laborers and whose parents were willing to send them. Finally, children usually only attended school up to the fifth or sixth grade (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976). Libraries in schools were part of Horace Mann's early plans for education, and he even foreshadowed the formation of public libraries by trying to make school libraries available to the entire community (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976; Mann, 1840; Powell, 1917;

Sensenig, 2011). Moreover, even though not all early educators agreed with him, Mann embraced and promoted the role of happiness, pleasure, and satisfying interests in motivating children to read, emphasizing that school libraries should not include textbooks but reading that was suitable during leisure when the need was to “unbend” from studies (Mann, 1840, p. 63). Indeed, a quick perusal of Mann’s lectures on education finds him speaking the language of children’s librarians as he repeatedly wished for children to turn to books for pleasure and to find happiness in libraries, for the public to donate to the library, and for the public to recognize there is no such thing as danger from reading bad books (Mann, 1840).

The creation of public libraries in America was but a half-step behind the development of schools. In addition to the creation of school libraries initially intended to serve the needs of the entire community, libraries for children often arose from informal reading clubs (Lopez, 1976; Mann, 1840; Powell, 1917; Sensenig, 2011). Like schools, public libraries were more likely to spring up in larger cities and towns such as the initiation of the Boston Public Library in 1852 (Cuban & Cuban, 2007; Long, 1969; Sensenig, 2011; Wiegand, 2009). Like schools, they did not begin by serving all children; only children from the more educated middle class used them regularly despite the libraries themselves being open to all classes (Lopez, 1976; Sensenig, 2011). Further, initially it was often the case that only children above the age of 12 were permitted to use libraries (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976; Sensenig, 2011; Walter, 2001; Wiegand, 2009).

The official beginning of public libraries has been pegged to the creation of the American Library Association in 1876 (Lawal, 2009; Long, 1969; Wiegand, 2009). In that very same year, the question of how public libraries should serve children was

already being asked, and existing age restrictions on library use were being challenged (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976). Stalwart leaders of the library profession, Melvil Dewey and John Cotton Dana, agreed that public libraries were part of the educational system, that libraries helped to create moral character, and that libraries should provide children with reading that was pleasurable (Dana, 1896; Dewey, 1989). From the earliest days of the profession, children's librarians had a stout commitment to making pleasure a part of the library and book experience for children (Hearne & Jenkins, 1999; Powell, 1917). In fact, this was sometimes identified as a major difference between schools and public libraries, even in the earliest years of American public libraries (Hearne & Jenkins, 1999; Powell, 1917). Although public library advocates were more likely to promote the library as part of the educational system than were formal educators who did not always think to include them, some, including Horace Mann, agreed on the value of public libraries in creating an educated citizenry (Long, 1969; Mann, 1840; Powell, 1917). Some saw the public library specifically as the source for informal education for children who were not in school or for the young adults who finished school at age twelve (Dana, 1896; Long, 1969; Powell, 1917; Wiegand, 2009). For the most part, proponents of public libraries were enthusiastic about providing children with books that would appeal to them, although others, including some educators, worried that light reading found on library shelves would be young readers' downfall and cause them to regress in their mastery of reading (Powell, 1917). One public library spokesperson and an early president of the American Library Association, Herbert Putnam, agreed with this concern and declared "emphatically" that public libraries were part of the educational system, but only in so much as they were sure to exclude any "flabby books" from the collection (1890, pp. 263-4). Public

librarians struggled for many of those early years both within the profession and outside of it to balance their response to the public's desire for enjoyable fiction with their desire to create an educated and enlightened citizenry according to the educational standards of the period.

Society shaped each path's goals, people served and accountability measures.

In the mid-19th Century, the informal teaching of children to read at home had religious, moral, and social purposes (Arizpe & Styles, 2011). Once schools and public libraries were decidedly launched late in the 19th Century, they began responding to societal changes using different methods while maintaining similar goals of producing moral and upright future citizens (Cuban & Cuban, 2007; Dewey, 1989; Sensenig, 2012; Wiegand, 2009). In addition, each institution was learning who exactly it was they were to serve, and each institution had to flex to accommodate the influx of immigrants from Europe (Jeynes, 2007; Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). For schools, this meant they had to have space for more students and additional ways to teach reading that accommodated a wider array of abilities (Alexander & Fox, 2008; Jeynes, 2007; Long, 1969; Sensenig, 2011). For libraries, it meant that, even as they were initially shaping their spaces and collections to welcome use by children (Long, 1969), they had to add in the role of being the free university for adults (O'Beirne, 2010; Powell, 1917; Sensenig, 2012). Specifically, libraries had to provide for those adults who were learning English as a second language and trying to educate themselves in order to find jobs during tough economic times (Jeynes, 2007; Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976; Wiegand, 2009).

There were other influences on schools and libraries during the initial period that shaped how they developed. Politically, the two prevalent lines of thought were that of

progressivism springing from John Dewey and others, and behaviorism or social efficiency from proponents such as first Edward Thorndike and then later B. F. Skinner (Long, 1969; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). Behaviorists believed the new factories represented the best, most efficient model for society and that schools and other organizations would do well to imitate their approach (Kaestle, 2012; Sensenig, 2012; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). As part of this nod to industrial society, Horace Mann's initial standardizing of schools evolved into an even more uniform curriculum, IQ testing, reading tests, and tracking schools according to ages (Jeynes, 2007; Kaestle, 2012). Literacy instruction approaches manifested in reading textbooks of this early 20th Century period reflected this emphasis on efficiency by shifting away from the laborious learning of the alphabet, first to a more efficient focus on whole words early in the learning to read process (Smith, 2002; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). Decoding, sounding out, and phonics all began to be touted as more scientific and efficient ways to teach reading (Smith, 2002; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). The content of the reading textbooks of this period continued with mostly patriotic documents and informational essays about nature and animals which were seen as more scientific and efficient for learning to read than stories and pleasure reading (Smith, 2002). To label the teaching of reading in schools as mechanical was seen as a positive by those who wanted their schools run on an industrial model (Kaestle, 2012; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). Indeed, some worried that if children read books from the public library, it would hamper or reverse the progress they were making in school (Powell, 1917) although children's librarians saw the public library's collections and services as an inviting reprieve from the dull and mechanical teaching encountered in the schools (Powell, 1917; Wiegand, 2009).

Meanwhile, there were Progressives such as Dewey who did not espouse the industrial model, but instead wanted to include the child's interests and motivation in education (Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). Public librarians and their leaders aligned more with the progressive viewpoint (Hearne & Jenkins, 1999; Walter, 2001). Indeed, support for informal learning among the greats of progressive and constructivism thought is substantial (Eshach, 2007; Falk & Heimlich, 2009; Paris, 1997). John Dewey's pragmatism and progressivism fit with informal learning's goals of serving the individual and holistic needs of the child as did his combining of play and work in successful teaching and learning (Skilbeck, 2017). Lev Vygotsky's notions of social learning (Paris & Paris, 2001) and Piaget's emphasis on play as critical to learning in childhood (Eshach, 2007) are both comfortable within the paradigm of informal learning.

Libraries had to respond to these same societal pressures for efficiency, but did so in their own way. The professional organization, the American Library Association, assisted with the demand for efficiency by adopting a phrase inspired by Melvil Dewey, "The best reading for the greatest number at the least cost" (Dewey, 1906, p. 55), although children's librarians continued addressing the whole child's individual interests keeping libraries more in line with the Progressives' viewpoint (Hearne & Jenkins, 1999; Powell, 1917). Undoubtedly, with each societal pressure that forced schools to change their curriculum and teaching strategies, but which libraries could sometimes sidestep, the two institutions more clearly differed in their approach to the initial shared goal of creating lifelong readers and learners.

As citizens demanded proof that school and public libraries were meeting their goals, there were further differences between these two paths. Budgets were tight

everywhere at the turn of the 20th Century, and both tax-supported entities—schools and public libraries—had to justify their existence to tax-payers (Wiegand, 2009). For schools which educated the majority of the children and were wholly dependent on taxes, this meant they had to prove their students would be able to successfully enter the work force after having been effectively taught what was most important for them to know and thus, standardized testing became more prevalent (Jeynes, 2007; Long, 1969). For librarians, they gradually learned that they had to temper their goals of emphasizing the reading of only the finest literature and allow freer access to less highfalutin choices of novels and adventure stories in order to demonstrate they could bring in more people (which was still only a fraction of the citizenry) and circulate more books. (Kaestle, 1991; Long, 1969; Walter, 2001; Wiegand, 2009). After all, libraries were dependent on free choice by their users, rather than the compulsory attendance that filled classroom seats and justified school taxes (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976; Wiegand, 2009). As a result, the number of schools quickly outpaced the number of public libraries and further separated the paths of the two organizations (Sensenig, 2012; Walter, 2001). Free choice by users of public libraries did set them as the ultimate democratic example of the will of the people's reading choices, but it also meant there were fewer libraries and less funding. This also meant the role of public libraries was concretized as purveyors of less universal informal learning such as that found in museums (Sensenig, 2011, 2012).

From the latest fashion in philosophical underpinnings to the growth of the nation through immigration, societal influences of America in the early part of the 20th Century nudged these three paths toward literacy to shift, expand, and diverge from their initially close alignment of goals and the methods to achieve them. Yet, because school teachers

and children's librarians each represented new professions, even more influences were in store as these fledgling professions matured.

Growth of the publishing industry molds the two professions. What exactly did it mean to be a qualified teacher of literacy in schools in 1918? Were children's librarians of that era clerks handling the storage of books, or did they have a role in how those books were used? These two young professions had to clarify and refine what it meant to be a qualified teacher or librarian (Wiegand, 2009) in order to demand more respect and salary than a person off the street. Meanwhile, informal educators of literacy simply continued what they had been doing. Parents were most often the informal educators of the time with the level of "training" to become their children's literacy teachers not something that was considered. Teachers, however, were beginning to be required to be trained at common schools with the undergraduate degree usually coming from normal schools (Warren, 1985). Reading, as a separate subject at normal schools, did not appear in college catalogs until 1948 (Benke, 2012; Hoffman & Pearson, 2000) even though a mastery of reading was seen as an essential part of training school teachers (Benke, 2012). Unmarried women were seen as likely teacher candidates (Warren, 1985), and children's librarianship was likewise seen as more suitable to women than men (Burke & Shields, 1974; Hearne & Jenkins, 1999). The first library school opened in 1887 (Wiegand, 2009), but Powell wrote in 1917 of the current paths to children's librarianship with none of them as a specific part of graduate library school. To this day, it is prevalent but not automatically required that children's librarians must have a graduate library degree (Benke, 2015).

One factor that shaped each profession, but in different ways, was the concurrent expansion of the publishing world (Wiegand, 2009). Books and textbooks were being printed more cheaply and related industries thrived as well (Wiegand, 2009). A few large textbook publishers found ways to control the industry by courting and selling to entire school districts who then found it necessary to shape teacher training and classroom pedagogy to match the textbooks (Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). In fact, basal readers were used to educate 90% of all students in reading in the country at that time (Pearson, 2002). This shift also represented a shift in who got to decide what the approach to literacy instruction should be: a mix of what textbook publishers could successfully sell; what reading professors consulting with textbook publishers believed, which was frequently steeped in progressivism; what textbook publishing editors wrote; and, much later, what powerful citizen textbook panels determined important (Shannon, 1989; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). In effect, textbook publishing had (and currently has) a major impact on what it means to be a reading teacher starting from the turn of the 20th Century (Venezky & Kaestle, 2009).

Children's librarians did not have to succumb to those particular forces changing the teaching profession, but they did react to the changes in the publishing world. New authors such as Beatrix Potter, Frank Baum, and Howard Pyle were helping children's literature to blossom with new titles (Wiegand, 2009). The public continued to expect that the library would include only the best titles in their collections, but who was to make the determination of which books were best to recommend when the children arrived at the library? Teachers were not especially conversant about children's literature and had their hands full with new approaches to literacy instruction presented by

textbooks (Powell, 1917). Thus, children's librarians became the experts and created journals and selection aides such as *Booklist* and *Children's Catalog*. They trained other children's librarians to build their collections using them (Wiegand, 2009) even as they continued providing what their users wanted to check out. As a result, publishers lined up to court libraries as well as schools (Wiegand, 2009) in hopes of selling more books.

Ultimately, the two professions—teaching and children's librarianship—moved forward in response to the growth of the textbook and children's literature publishing worlds, but further away from each other (Wiegand, 2009) in which methods and reading materials were considered acceptable and who was considered the expert in determining this. One distinctive expert role that also exhibited these professional differences is that of the storyteller. Storytelling was one educational strategy that was distinctively common in public libraries, but almost nonexistent in classrooms. Indeed, the history of storytelling in public libraries reveals how this practice shaped and expanded children's librarians' nascent roles as educators while allowing them to continue to meet popular demand for both materials and services in promoting reading.

Children's librarians develop unique educator roles through storytelling.

Storytelling settles in at public libraries. If ever there were a cultural touchstone representative of children's library services, it would be the library storytime. This traditional program consists of the reading of picture books for younger children (preschool up to third grade) and its predecessor, the storyhour, the telling and reading of stories for older children (third grade and older) (Walter, 2001). Storytelling and storytime programs represent one of the ways children's librarians shaped their profession differently than did teachers, although still using this traditional program as a

teacher might use a lesson plan or pedagogical strategy. As early as 1880, stories were being read aloud on Saturday mornings in the Hartford (Connecticut) Public Library by Caroline Hewins and by 1890, Anne Carroll Moore was formally holding storyhours at the Pratt Institute Free Library (Pellowski, 1990). Storytelling, where the presenter “tells” and does not use a book or text, was the most common mode used for these special programs directed at school-age children in the early years of public libraries. They were wildly popular with the obvious benefit of bringing more children and parents to the library. But, the rationale behind them was clearly that the children’s librarians could use them as a tool to promote a love of books and guide children to become better readers (Blanchard, 1909; Long, 1969). Shortly after this time period in 1927, 79% of American public libraries regularly held storytimes (Pellowski, 1990) with reports of crowds as large as over 300 and children being turned away because the room was too crowded (Long, 1969). As more picture books were being published and younger children, especially preschoolers, flocked to the library, storytimes with their emphasis on the more visual picture book began to be held, with the earliest ones occurring between 1930 and 1940 (Pellowski, 1990).

Not everyone was thrilled by storytelling. Storytelling is an ancient art often used throughout time as an informal teaching tool (Pellowski, 1990). In the early American schools, there were few instances of storytelling being considered an official part of the curriculum other than for kindergarten teachers who were sometimes accused of overusing it (Pellowski, 1990). Educators such as Maria Montessori and John Dewey promoted storytelling as a valid educational tool, yet it was only children’s librarians who wholeheartedly embraced storytelling and made it a part of the library experience in the

early part of the 20th Century (Pellowski, 1990). Some theorized that teachers could not fit learning to be a storyteller into their already full course load as they became teachers or into the long list of requirements they already faced as they taught (Pellowski, 1990).

Library administrators were mixed in their support for storytelling at the library, sometimes perceiving it as an inefficient use of funds and an ersatz educational approach that benefitted only a few. Sensenig (2012) and Pellowski (1990) both cite John Cotton Dana's efforts to discourage children's librarians from spending so much time on storytelling, suggesting that teachers would know better when its use was appropriate in the classroom. Instead, Dana suggested that children's librarians take their enthusiasm for storytelling and transform it into storytelling classes presented to teachers. However, the storytelling programs for children were so popular, looked so appealing to the public, and resulted in such boosts to circulation that administrators backed off on their criticisms (Pellowski, 1990). Moreover, storytelling served the public library's purpose as an extended school experience by attracting children who were not attending school (Pellowski, 1990). Even as budgets were further tightened when America headed off to World War I and children's librarians were encouraged to scale back on storytelling so they could take on other duties, they protested that children needed the stories. Stories brought to children through storytelling would help during that stressful time, in much the same way that their parents needed to read what gave them pleasure to deal with the grimness of war (Pellowski, 1990).

Children's librarians utilize storytelling for literacy education. Although children's librarians were clear that storytelling programs had to be pleasurable and should not be told primarily for the purpose of teaching something specific, they were

also clear that they wanted children to learn something in the process—literacy. To these pioneering professionals, literacy education meant creating a disposition in the children to become readers, and that is what they taught (Long, 1969; Sensenig, 2012). They wanted the children to learn to love stories, to acquire culture, and to desire to read stories in books. Story programs proved to be one of the most direct and intensive ways that children’s librarians could have an educational effect on children. Story programs also reflected the image children’s librarians had of themselves as literacy educators even as the profession was first established. According to Caroline Burnite, a children’s librarian in Cleveland in 1904, the library was an educational force in the mental progress of the child, and it was a grave responsibility for the children’s librarian to make this happen using the very best books and services (Long, 1969). Storytime presenters were given some direction by their supervisors of general policies for story programs, but each children’s librarian was responsible for the selection and preparation of the stories to be told in much the same way that a teacher prepares a lesson plan, keeping in mind the overall goals and the best possible teaching strategies (Gilton, 2012; Long, 1969). Further, children’s librarians separated the children into age groupings reflecting which stories would be the most developmentally appropriate for them (Long, 1969). Interestingly, library storytelling programs, which presented the “whole” of literacy utilizing the very elocutionary skills that were once primary in early American reading instruction, harshly contrasted with the mechanical, syllabic approach to reading instruction found in the schools of the period. Indeed, storyteller and children’s librarian Sara Cone Bryant later suggested that teachers could learn how to improve their teaching using the library’s popular educational tool of storytelling (Sensenig, 2012). Children’s

librarians also assessed their “teaching” in storytimes through the outward signs—outputs—showing success. They found it in the extent of the children’s engagement during the storytelling, be it their absorbed listening or laughter. The subsequent checking out of books exhibited the desire of the children to enjoy more stories. Even the children’s returning to future storytelling programs could be taken as signs that the “lesson” of loving books (and the library) was being learned.

For the early part of the 19th Century, public libraries were clear that they wanted to bring to their patrons culture and reading pleasure. The early storytelling and storytime programs strove to do this as well. The emphasis therein was not just about providing fun for the fun of it, but was also a way to motivate children to engage with print (Blanchard, 1909; Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976). Moreover, story programs since served as barometers for whatever current educational trends were affecting public libraries at the time. This can be seen in each historical period discussed below as story programs evolved to reflect school readiness in the ‘70s, early literacy at the turn of the 21st Century, and most recently, parent education in early literacy.

Ultimately, the period of 1840-1914 represents the period when public education blossomed and assumed the role of universally educating young Americans (Jeynes, 2007; Long, 1969). Public libraries began on almost equal footing with schools and were initially considered an integral part of the educational system. Long (1969) saw the period from 1876 to 1900 as one where the two institutions collaborated well through things such as special borrower cards for teachers and collections on loan to the classroom. But public libraries later quickly fell behind as more schools were created and schooling became compulsory and able to demand more support from local governments

(Broderick, 1977; Sensenig, 2012). Public libraries were able to maintain their very democratic, but more tenuous claim to support because citizens chose to use them. This meant they moved into a secondary status along with the other more informal educational sources such as museums and the home (Cremin, 1980; Wiegand, 2009). By the time of World War I, public schools had claimed their role of providing education and the teaching of reading (Venezky & Kaestle, 2009), striving to make it efficient but also, reportedly, making it mechanical and dull. The instigation of testing into the schools represented further cementing of the idea that education should scientifically and efficiently prove their efficiency in producing a learned citizenry.

Children's librarians, meanwhile, focused on what would bring children and parents back by choice to the library and found that the books, programs, and services that emphasized enjoyment were most successful and most "efficient." As for materials used in learning to read, most teachers were handed basals and told to teach according to the publishers' instructions which may or may not have been vetted through reading professors. Teachers had started receiving training in different subjects in normal schools, but usually not education in children's literature, storytelling, or the specifics of reading instruction. Meanwhile, children's librarians claimed their role as educators by becoming purveyors of the best in children's literature—books that would be loved by children as well as help them become moral and upright citizens. They created their own selection tools which then pressured publishers to work with them in order to do business with libraries. They also carved out their role as storytellers who promoted those books and helped children learn to love reading. Thus, the two professions evolved along the path of creating readers. Teachers did this with more children, more demands on how to teach,

less freedom in how to motivate children to read, obligatory testing to evaluate effectiveness, and a steadier stream of funding. Children's librarians did this with a much smaller slice of the population of children and parents, more leeway in providing the path to reading, more emphasis on reading as enjoyment, limited justification for their effectiveness through numbers participating, and a very tentative source of funding. It was the beginning of the diverging of paths and one that moved public libraries more towards the road of informal learning and its defining emphasis on enjoyment as motivation, while schools were forced to be more concerned with efficient instruction than with engaging the students. The following two decades further separated the two paths through the amplification of these differences.

1918-1940--Teachers, Children's Librarians, and the Tug of War over Creating Readers

Forces such as World War I, increased immigration, and the excitement over an industrial society shaped American schools and libraries from the outside. Meanwhile, growing pains on the inside for each of these professions were moving the two institutions apart in approach even as they continued to share the desire for a literate and moral citizenry. For example, although public librarians only occasionally had officials telling them specifics in how to do their business, schools and teachers faced ongoing controversy from educational and political leaders over how to teach effectively (Pellowski, 1990; Powell, 1917; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). As an example of this, a very mechanized and proscribed phonics instruction method started to predominate shaping the more commonly accepted way children were supposed to learn to read (Smith, 2002; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). Since libraries did not follow a curriculum nor could they

count on the majority of children coming regularly to the library, they could not demonstrate how reading should be directly taught and, thus, operated in an increasingly separated sphere (Powell, 1917; Sensenig, 2011). Smith (2002), Kaestle (2012), and Venezky and Kaestle (2009) described how during this time period, textbooks reflected scientific approaches, use of testing, silent reading pedagogy, a movement away from elocution, more emphasis on comprehension, and reading that was relevant to the student's life. It was at this time that standardized testing and its promise of ever-increasing efficiency in teaching continued to shape how schools were structured and what was valued in the curriculum (Jeynes, 2007; Kaestle, 2012; Smith, 2002). Again, neither the home nor libraries participated in applying these tools and, thus, formal schools could claim they were the principal teachers of reading (Sensenig, 2011).

Although money was tight for all tax-supported institutions, schools were first in line to receive funding while public libraries were dependent on donations and could face even more of a budget shortfall than schools. Moreover, libraries had to prove they were worthy of funding by providing services that would bring in as many users as possible. In the '30s, that continued to be service to adults, particularly immigrant adults, and addressing their needs to be prepared for jobs and learn about their communities (Long, 1969). At about the same time, children's services in libraries needed more support (Long, 1969), but few changes could happen until after World War II (Walter, 2001). The assumption of many funders at the time was that the schools were already taking care of the children; thus, libraries did not need to spend much time or money in that arena (Cuban & Cuban, 2007). In fact, in the first of many instances in the history of children's services, government officials in some communities advocated for folding public library

service to children into the schools in order to save taxpayer dollars (Powell, 1917; Sattley, 1974). Few of these attempts were sustainable, with many protestations from public librarians that the purposes of the two institutions were significantly different (Fitzgibbons, 2000). They also contended that children would resist coming to the public library outside the school day if it were located in a school (Burke, 1974).

One children's librarian of the period, Sophie Powell (1917), detailed the varying viewpoints of the two professions. Children's librarians, she admitted, could sometimes look down on teachers as not knowing much about children's literature, being too mechanistic and rigid in their approach to reading, not giving enough attention to the cultural side of books, and basically not understanding the value of public library service to children. Indeed, many children's librarians felt the role of the public library as a legitimate partner in education, especially as a continuation of formal schooling, had not been recognized. Teachers of the time, according to Powell (1917) and Long (1969), on the other hand, felt that children's librarians did not realize how much teachers had to do. Powell wrote that teachers worried that students reading their choice of library books would undo what teachers were trying to teach them about reading in the schools. There, students only stepped up gradually to higher-level books when the teacher felt they were ready to build on what they already knew. The choices afforded children in the public library frequently bypassed that lock-step approach to reading. Hearne and Jenkins (1999) wrote about the values even the earliest children's librarians held dear and how this stance of restricting children's choices in books to only a specific level conflicted with what children's librarians believed. Choice about reading level was one value those pioneering librarians felt was best left to the child. This and other aspects of formal

education at that time led teachers, according to Powell, to believe children's librarians did not understand modern education. Indeed, Powell (1917) cited some educators of the time interpreting John Dewey as believing that children should avoid learning to read in primary school since reading was not focused on the concrete and could create "bad mental habits" (pp. 9-10). Powell also suggested that as children's librarians focused on establishing their profession, they were spending less time collaborating with schools and that, if they were intending to be considered part of the educational system, they should be sure to cooperate with the "older institution" (p. 3). Indeed, she intimated that children's librarians needed to empathize with how "narrowing mentally and even deadening spiritually" (p. 169). The teacher's world was in comparison to the children's librarians' stimulating environment. The two worlds were, indeed, becoming more specialized and as a result, they were becoming more distant even as their statements on the goals of children becoming readers were continuing to be "astonishingly similar" (p. vi).

Powell's (1917) perception of the differences between the schools and the public libraries during this time depicts a philosophical tug of war between the two institutions. Librarians assumed they knew "what a child ought to *read*" (emphasis mine) (p. 192) and that they were an integral part of the educational system but independent, separate, and capable of determining their own rules. Educators within the schools assumed they knew "what a child ought to *become*" (emphasis mine) (p. 192) and that libraries just fostered a reading habit and did not create a reading facility. Was this in reference to the reliance of libraries on the number of outputs—books being circulated—as a way to show effectiveness? Was this challenging libraries' claim of being educational when they could

offer no direct proof through standardized tests as to their outcomes (Powell, 1917)?

These factors added up to society in general at the time thinking of the public library as more recreational than educational, an institution subordinate to schools (Kaestle, 1991; Powell, 1917; Wiegand, 2009). The school's claim to superiority in educating the child was even as the world of education was buffeted by a multitude of new ideas and accompanying controversies. Powell (1917) summed up the differences as "The librarian is necessarily the book expert, not the child expert" (p. 3). Throughout the exchanges that Powell described, there is much characterizing of the teaching of reading in the schools as dull, irksome, mechanical, and laborious. Meanwhile, the reading the library offered was labeled as entertaining, pleasurable, recreational, and cultural.

This view of libraries offering reading that was entertaining was not restricted to children. Yes, the public library was frequently referred to as a university for the people who were new to the country or looking for a job (Cuban & Cuban, 2007; Powell, 1917; Wiegand, 2009), a continuing education experience for adolescents, and the source of important information about the community or a world involved in wars. However, they were also considered to be the source of pleasurable reading for adults (Kaestle, 1991). Even the battle to get adults to read fewer novels and more great literature was quietly being lost. Adults and children read mostly for pleasure (Hearne & Jenkins, 1999; Kaestle, 1991), and libraries responded with services and programs to help them do just that so that users would come through the doors in increasing numbers. Even in the earliest years, the storyhour or storytime became the default way to accomplish this and further the children's librarians' role as a literacy educator. Still, the road ahead left libraries in the dust when it came to which institutions were widely considered as a

source for literacy education. Schools over the next 30 years became the focus of all literacy learning as well as the squabbles of how it should be accomplished. Children's librarians were only too willing to avoid those controversies and focused, instead, on how to be quiet allies to the schools and best friends to children wanting to enjoy the pleasure of books.

1941-1970—Scientifically Based Teaching Omits Informal Learning and Libraries

The threat of the Russians alters the teaching of reading. As might be expected, wars had a tremendous effect on informal learning opportunities, public libraries, schools, and especially the teaching of reading. In effect, literacy instruction took on the seriousness of a national defense issue (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2000; Sensenig, 2011) considered to be rightfully addressed only in schools, with anything less formal considered inconsequential. And, the schools swerved back and forth during these 30 years trying to meet the demands of what was considered the best way to teach reading according to the theories and government-imposed educational reforms that currently held the most sway (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2000; Condon, 2015). Children's librarians responded by accepting that, although they had no desire to be part of the dry textbook approach to reading instruction, they still wanted to be involved in promoting the pleasures of reading to children.

Whereas WWI taught teachers to tighten their belts even as they welcomed additional students, librarians also flexed to accommodate the newly arrived immigrants. This included more openly accepting users reading novels and adventure stories outside the canon of fine literature. It was also during WWI that the country began to realize

how many of their young military recruits were functionally illiterate (Kaestle, 2012; Smith, 2002). After the second global war, there came the additional worry that if the Russians could launch Sputnik before Americans could (1957), they must be better educated and more capable of taking over the United States (Jeynes, 2007). Yet, as early as 1940, Americans were for the most part readers. Over 51% were graduating from high school (Kaestle & Radway, 2009, p. 528). But, the issue was which young men could be considered, as defined by the U.S. Army in WWI, as “functionally literate” or having a fourth-grade level of literacy (Kaestle & Radway, 2009, p. 528). Further, were there enough literate Americans to compete with—and defend the country from—the Russian threat of the 1950s?

In mid-century America, the swelling emphasis on efficiency, speed, and scientific methods based on research led to an expectation that there must be one best method to teach literacy that could guarantee all children would learn—and learn quickly (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2000; Cunningham, 2011; Pressley, 2002; Sensenig, 2012) in much the same way that factories were finding the fastest way to produce goods. This led to a focus on cognitive models of how humans comprehend text (Sensenig, 2011), how scientific measurements were believed to show mastery of reading (Kaestle, 2012; Pearson, 2002; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009), how that might be translated into a set of discrete skills that could each have their own specific training instructions (Kaestle, 2012; Sensenig, 2011, 2012), and how that might be facilitated through explicit instruction in the schools (Kaestle, 2012; Sensenig, 2012). Very little of this scientific approach to reading related to the emphasis on the “whole child,” reading as pleasure, or taking your time to become a lifelong reader that was espoused by children’s librarians in the middle

of the 20th Century (Broderick, 1977; Hearne & Jenkins, 1999). At the beginning of their profession, children's librarians had emphasized putting only the best of children's literature into the hands of young readers. But by the middle of the 20th Century, leaders in the field were making the case for including mediocre literature such as series books (e.g., Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys) as ways to keep children on the path to becoming lifelong readers and ultimately readers of the best in literature (Broderick, 1977; Long, 1969; Ross, 2009). They believed this would be effective in creating proficient readers, but this more indirect, long-term approach to reading had no way to show its effectiveness or speed in creating readers. So began the period when formal schooling claimed primary responsibility for the teaching of reading, excluding libraries and even the informal learning home environment as actors in the process (Sensenig, 2011).

This also began the period of the government becoming more involved in how schools operated (Allington, 2002; Jeynes, 2007). Although IQ testing and other curriculum-related tests had been used in limited ways for a few decades (Kaestle, 2012), the strong pressure on the government to build more schools to accommodate the baby boom population (Jeynes, 2007) meant there was a growing interest in holding schools accountable (Allington, 2002). Several major legislative events of the time financially supported schools: the National School Lunch Act spelling out how a subsidized lunch program should operate (1946) (Jeynes, 2007); the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) designed to improve the teaching of math, science, and foreign languages and provide the first federal loans for higher education (1958) (Jeynes, 2007); and, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) created to provide federal funds to help low-income students (1965) (Jeynes, 2007). Standardized assessments to hold

schools accountable for the spending of government funds became incorporated into these education laws (Allington, 2002; Jeynes, 2007). They also helped schools finance testing (Kaestle, 2012) and created the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) to assist the U.S. Department of Education in conducting tests in reading, math, and other subjects by 1969 (Kaestle, 2012). Although some educators resisted the tyranny of tests as making education too narrow in scope (Allington, 2002), many others espoused the efficiency of using scientifically valid ways to improve education (Kaestle, 2012). One way or the other, libraries were excluded from receiving any of the financial support being distributed because the laws declared that funds could only go to programs which “improve language and literacy using scientifically based reading research and evidence-based language and literacy strategies” (Sensenig, 2012, p. 77).

Several different approaches to the teaching of reading had been going in and out of favor since the beginning of the century. In fact, a quote from Herbert Spencer (1919) aptly compared the fluctuations, saying “Men dress their children’s minds as they do their bodies in the prevailing fashion” (p. 2). In the ‘40s, the emphasis shifted away from phonics to the whole-word recognition or look-say method based on research by William S. Gray and shaped for the classroom through the Dick and Jane readers (1940) (Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). In addition, these readers “taught” more than reading through the colorful stereotypical illustrations of moms in aprons and dads coming home from work. Indeed, the strong presence of illustrations was a new feature for basal readers (Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). On another front, silent reading was coming into its own and was seen as more efficient (Venezky & Kaestle, 2009), not only as a valid way to teach reading,

but as a better way to test what children had learned (Smith, 2002; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009).

In 1953, B. F. Skinner's *Science and Human Behavior* was published, and behaviorism became widely accepted in education as well as in society generally (Alexander & Fox, 2008). Phonics with its emphasis on discrete skills taught in sequential, hierarchical order fit comfortably with behaviorism, and some literacy educators felt that simply applying the laboratory model of behavior change to children and progressing through the phonics skills insured an end-of-the-assembly-line result of a competent reader (Walker, 2008). In reality, during that time, there were quite a few different ways to use phonics to teach reading as well as the other reading instructional methods such as look-say and language experience where the child learned to read with stories they had composed. In the midst of this mashup and swinging back and forth of approaches and society embracing behaviorism, Rudolf Flesch, a writing consultant who happened to have a Ph.D. in Library Science (Pace, 1986), published the passionate self-help book for parents titled *Why Johnny Can't Read: And What You Can Do About It* (1955). The power of this book, which sold over a half of a million copies (Walker, 2008), was in the perfect storm of pressures on parents to get their children to read. To begin with, there were so many more children in the schools, thanks to the baby boom, that teachers and parents were faced with the challenge of getting children with varying abilities to all end up in the same place as competent readers (Sensenig, 2011). Sputnik was launched in 1957, shortly after Flesch's book was released in 1955 (Walker, 2008). Parents who remembered World War II worried about being able to resist being overthrown by smarter Russians and their child not learning to read increased that worry

significantly (Jeynes, 2007; Schantz & Zimmer, 2005). Schantz and Zimmer (2005) describe Flesch's book as claiming that public education was broken and that literacy education must be reformed. He based his phonics argument on what he saw as the illogical and inefficient literacy education based on the whole-word approach. It was a book that some thought inflammatory and aimed to unfairly challenge the public education system (Lamkin, 1955; Schantz & Zimmer, 2005). A bestseller for over 30 weeks, it successfully moved parents to act, and the schools caved to the demand that phonics be taught as the primary way to learn to read (Schantz & Zimmer, 2005; Walker, 2008).

By the mid-1960s, two government-sponsored research studies were conducted trying to ascertain which approach to teaching reading was the most effective. *First Grade Studies* (Bond & Dykstra, 1967) determined no one method alone was successful, but a combination of them worked best. Jeanne Chall analyzed studies in her *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* and found the code-emphasis (phonics) approach was more effective than meaning-emphasis (whole word) approach (Allington, 2002; Pearson, 2002). These studies along with one by Gibson (1965) uncovered more nuanced success and lack of success with phonics programs, but in the '50s and later, the public tended to lump it together and interpret it all as supportive of phonics. Some even attached a message of anti-Christian fundamentalism to non-phonics methodologies (Allington, 2002). This resulted in an explosion of basal readers using phonics and ultimately meant that teachers were coerced into using some form of phonics approach in their teaching of reading (Allington, 2002).

Children's librarians adjust roles to be allies in the teaching of reading. It is no wonder that in this time of great controversy, children's librarians expressed little interest in being considered literacy educators. With an approach of dissecting texts into parts being considered the "best" way to teach reading in the classroom, the parallels with reading as promoted in the public library was tenuous. Even formal educators agreed that use of the phonics approach in classrooms meant it would be a considerable time before beginning readers even got around to reading "real" books in the schools (Walker, 2008). Parents during this time were cautioned to cease their informal reading instruction in the home and leave it all to the professionals in the schools. Thus, informal learning generally shifted to a role as an extra luxury during leisure time and was not considered to count for as much as formal schooling (Hull & Schultz, 2001; Illich, 1971). Schools equaled learning equaled education. Any learning outside that paradigm was dismissed as inconsequential (Falk & Dierking, 2010; Holt, 1964; Sensenig, 2012).

For children's librarians, the value of their role shifted to be more as allies of reading, rather than as instructors (Ross, 2009). Perhaps the first federal assistance for school libraries that came with the Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965) further distanced public libraries from the schools. School libraries received more support and funding for their collections and needed public library collaboration even less (Sensenig, 2011). Besides, public libraries had their hands full with veterans, immigrants, and a new role of being the community information center (Broderick, 1974; Sensenig, 2011). In fact, during this period in public library history the focus was more on services to adults than to children (Izard, 1974; Ross, 2009; Sensenig, 2011). Libraries were still about literacy acquisition, but more about adults acquiring literacy (Ross, 2009;

Sensenig, 2011). Libraries were still about books, but with the new emphasis on community information, they were becoming more about the information needed than the format of it. This shift foreshadowed new formats to come. Children's librarians, often pressed into service to adults to accommodate this new role (Sensenig, 2011) and sometimes pressured to cut back on programs such as storytimes (Pellowski, 1990), continued on their path of providing pleasure reading to children, exercising their authority as the professionals who knew which were the best children's books, and hosting wildly popular programs (Broderick, 1977).

It is interesting to note here the work of children's librarians Betsy Hearne and Christine Jenkins (1999). They studied the crusades of the early leaders of children's librarianship, gathered 11 "sacred texts" published by them from 1929-1969, and plumbed them for the "articles of faith" that constituted an initial creed of children's librarianship:

1. A belief in the primacy and uniqueness of the individual child.
2. A belief in the critical importance of individual choice in young people's reading.
3. A firm belief in the strength and resilience of young people.
4. A belief in the children's room as an egalitarian republic of readers.
5. A belief in literature as a positive force for understanding not only between individuals, but also between groups, and nations.
6. A friendly and unsentimental older sister's attitude toward children.
7. An assumption that children's librarians would inevitably face and prevail over adversity in the performance of their profession.

(Hearne & Jenkins, 1999, p. 552-557)

These articles help us understand how children's librarians were fierce in providing a haven in the library from the storms caused by successive educational reforms and weathered a variety of challenges as the profession became firmly established.

The 30 years before 1970 represent a time of great change for the teaching of reading. In the schools it became more decidedly a matter of applying a scientific method of instruction (Sensenig, 2012; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). Further, the stakes of teaching children to be able to compete on the global front was considered too high to leave the matter of teaching children to anything considered less proven or efficient. Learning to read through less formal efforts in home and public libraries was considered inconsequential—more of the realm of leisure activities. This meant children's librarians stayed the course of encouraging children to read for pleasure and began drawing clearer lines between their roles and that of school teachers. Thus, the period that began with the alarming race for space with the Russians finished with Flesch's and others' finger pointing at the schools for not using science-based instructions to keep us globally competitive. And, so began the last 30 years of the 20th Century, with its education rebellions that espoused informal learning as better, educational reforms spawned by the government, major changes in information technology, and libraries that persisted as they tried to figure out where they fit in as information specialists and literacy educators.

1970-1999--Industrial Age Makes Way for the Learning Society

Over the final 30 years of the 20th Century, society, politics, technology, informal learning, formal schooling, and public libraries of America encountered tremendous change. The Vietnam War which had elicited widespread protests from young people

and, ultimately, the population at large, ended in 1975. Woodstock occurred in 1969 and by 1975, the hippie movement was waning (Jeynes, 2007). However, feminism, racism, sexism, and multiculturalism themes continued to play out in society, government, and ultimately in schools (Jeynes, 2007). Dorothy Broderick in her work *Library Work with Children* (1977, p. 34) describing the state of children's librarianship at the time labeled a chapter "The Ism Controversy" discussing how these trends affected the role of the children's librarian, the intellectual freedom rights of children, and the goals for providing a balanced collection to children. Yet, these occurrences are but signs of a much larger change similar in magnitude to the change brought about by the onset of the Industrial Age of the 19th Century. In the same way that age shaped education generally, it also shaped goals for the teaching of reading, the professional roles that were involved in literacy education, and the motivations that were considered effective in teaching reading. So, too, did the next age, ultimately known as the Learning Society, shape both concepts about education, the role of the more knowledgeable other, and how children best learn to read. In fact, the role of libraries as part of the formal education arena shifted significantly when President Bill Clinton in 1996 removed libraries from the Department of Education and, instead, placed them more definitively on the informal learning path by creating the Institute for Museums and Library Services (IMLS) for both libraries and museums. Further, new research on the brain and the importance of very early learning forced formal educators to consider how much learning occurred before schooling started and whether government should support that learning. Children's librarians, too, began to pay attention to how their roles intersected with very early learning and the parents' roles as first teacher.

Global economy, Information Age, and technology define the Learning

Society. Each age of the United States, be it the Industrial Revolution since the 19th Century or the Learning Society beginning around the middle of the 20th Century, is connected to how people learn. In the Industrial Age, it was about creating products and dispensing knowledge. For the Learning Society, the economy has been about provision of information and information-related services and preparing students to deal with the explosion of information in a global landscape. The term *Learning Society* is just one of multiple monikers for the changes that happened primarily from 1970 on, including the Knowledge Age, the Information Age, the Digital Age, and the Learning Age (Pugh, 2017). Falk and Dierking (2010) favored the term Learning Society, because, as individuals in America gained more leisure (Falk, 2005; Liu & Falk, 2014), more technology to make it happen in personalized ways, and competition on a global level to make it critically important and marketable, learning became a way of life (Falk & Dierking, 2002). Moreover, because learning in the Information Age underlies the economy, effective learning became the most fruitful economic policy (O’Beirne, 2010).

Science, theory, and technology forge new understanding of human learning.

For the most part, America’s 20th Century education reflected the Industrial Age with a pedagogical model that stressed mass production. Everyone was expected to acquire knowledge that was basically static and absolute, and every child was expected to learn it at more or less the same rate (Alexander & Fox, 2013; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2011a). Education occurred in basically closed settings, and the socially accepted understanding was that only formal schooling counted (Barron & Bell, 2016). Throughout much of the history of civilization, there had not been a need to question the universality of this

concept of education being the transfer of knowledge. When Vygotsky and other constructivists presented new paradigms, alternative understandings of learning entered the discussions about education. In true learning, the “knowledge” being *transferred* is actually *transforming* the individual (Illich, 1971; Rogoff, 1991; Tal, & Morag, 2007). With the acceptance of constructivist theory, learning started being put in context of the individuals’ knowledge and understanding through personally constructed views of reality within cultural and social settings (Alexander & Fox, 2013; Falk & Dierking, 2002; Gee, 2001; Rogoff, 1991). In addition, progress in the neurosciences also did much to change the understanding of how humans learn by revealing changes in the brain in response to learning that could not yet be seen in human behavior (Barron & Bell, 2016; Falk, 2005; Sensenig, 2011). The 1980s were critical in this shift because of advances in neuroimaging that allowed a better understanding of how learning occurs in a normal brain (Alexander & Fox, 2013; Tokuhamas-Espinosa, 2011a). Gradually, many began to see learning as a very individualized process within a specific culture and specific time (Tokuhamas-Espinosa, 2011b). Falk and Dierking appear to speak for many in the informal learning arena such as Barron and Bell (2016) and McCombs (1991) when they stated, “The goal of all education should be individual growth and fulfillment,” and that individuals must make decisions to enhance their learning and design their own learning environments (Falk & Dierking, 2002, p. 165).

This concept of education began to widen in the ‘60s and ‘70s when Paolo Freire wrote *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), Donald Schön wrote *Beyond the Stable State: Public and Private Learning in a Changing Society* (1971), John Holt published *How Children Fail* (1964), and Ivan Illich, a Catholic priest, educator, and philosopher,

published *Deschooling Society* (1971). Each author faulted formal education for not getting it right. Friere supported an education that was politically favorable to the oppressed and applied his theories by preparing 300 sugar cane workers to vote by teaching them how to read in 45 days starting with words that were powerfully important in their lives such as *hunger* (Bentley, 1999; Freire & Macedo, 1995). Donald Schön tied a world of increasing change to the need for continual learning—a Learning Society—that provided transformative learning through learning systems (Smith, 2000). Illich railed against the schools and called for society to be “de-schooled” in order to save the children from the hopelessly inefficient and unsuccessful way they were being taught (Illich, 1971). He saw learning as happening best through informal networks using institutions such as libraries instead of school buildings (Illich, 1971). At about the same time, John Holt started the homeschooling movement with his book *How Children Fail* (1964). Within his later newsletter publication, *Growing Without Schooling* (1999), Holt encouraged parents to “un-school” and teach their children at home using resources in the community such as the public library. He felt that schools disrupted the natural process of learning (Davis, 2011) and were unlikely to ever accomplish reforms they direly needed (Holt, 1964). Integral to these radical ideas was an evolving understanding of how people learn. Where the traditional view had been that learning was a matter of knowledge acquired through a linear process that all students went through in the same way and at the same pace (Falk, 2005; Falk & Dierking, 2002), the great strides in brain research in the latter part of the 20th Century created a new understanding of learning as a process that occurs through interactions between the learner and his culture, community, and environment (Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2011b). In addition, Vygotsky’s constructivism was

becoming popular and fit well with the new understandings of cognitive science (Tokuhamas-Espinosa, 2011b). Nor did the more recent science support the traditional belief that every child could learn in the same way and at the same speed (Falk & Sheppard, 2006; Tokuhamas-Espinosa, 2011b). The school's usual approach now no longer fit for many. Where America had been in an Industrial Age producing products as an end goal, it was now in the Learning Society with an economy that was based on information and services (Smith, 2013). Leisure time expanded, and it was beginning to be realized among many that lifelong learning needed to become a way of life (Falk, 2005; Liu & Falk, 2014; Wilhelm & Smith, 2014).

Theorists debate the role of the teacher in the Learning Society. Throughout human civilization formal schooling has consistently included a teacher teaching. However, this has not been as tacit in informal learning. Barron and Bell (2016) pointed out that because informal learning is as variable as the individuals and institutions involved, the types of relationships between young learners and the adults assisting them in informal learning environments is also variable. Vygotsky (1978) conceptualized the role of teacher as a person—even an older child—who was more capable and could provide guidance as needed or desired. But since all learning is based in social and cultural context, he did not see that more knowledgeable person as operating outside of the cultural context and, indeed, saw the interaction as co-constructing knowledge. Barbara Rogoff (1991) similarly recognized the importance of adults guiding the child in participating within a cultural context, but emphasized the importance of the learner's active role in learning and that frequently the adult's role in the learning is not explicit. According to Spolin (1963), "No one teaches anyone anything. If the environment

permits it, anyone can learn whatever he chooses to learn; and if the individual permits it, the environment will teach him everything it has to teach” (p. 3). Similarly, Piaget framed it thus:

Children should be able to do their own experimenting and their own research. Teachers, of course, can guide them by providing appropriate materials, but the essential thing is that in order for a child to understand something, he must construct it himself, he must re-invent it. Every time we teach a child something, we keep him from inventing it himself. On the other hand, that which we allow him to discover by himself will remain with him visibly for the rest of his life. (Piaget, 1972, p. 27)

A summary of these theoretical interpretations seems to point to a teacher role that is broadly defined and is omnipresent in the child’s world, not just in formal schooling.

Illich (1971) also had much to say about the relationship between teaching and learning. As a spokesperson during the era that informal learning began to come into its own, his words give vivid insight into the contrasts between formal education and informal education. In *Deschooling Society*, he repeatedly claimed that formal schooling confuses teaching with learning. Regarding the teaching profession, his comments are virulent at best and accusatory at worst:

- “Pupils do most of their learning without, and often despite, their teachers.” (p. 18)
- Schools are designed on the assumption that there is a secret to everything in life; that the quality of life depends on knowing that secret; that secrets can be

known only in orderly successions; and that only teachers can properly reveal these secrets. (p. 44)

- “In school we are taught that valuable learning is the result of attendance; that the value of learning increases with the amount of input; and, finally, that this value can be measured and documented by grades and certificates.” (p. 24)

Yet, Illich (1971) allowed that there were people who could assist in learning. In a deschooled society, his ideal was a learning network that would need professional personnel, but they would be more like museum docents or reference librarians or even a maître d’hôtel helping with the use of educational artifacts. He admitted skilled craftsmen were needed when there was the type of learning that occurred best from someone who already possessed the skills, but he had little hope that a schooled society would allow any individuals without an acceptable certificate to claim such a teaching role. Illich did have empathy for teachers because of the strictures formal education placed on them and he envisioned a deschooled society where former school teachers could play a positive role:

Pedagogues, in an unschooled world, would also come into their own, and be able to do what frustrated teachers pretend to pursue today. . . the pedagogue would help the student to find the path which for him could lead fastest to his goal. . . . In such a society exploratory, inventive, creative teaching would logically be counted among the most desirable forms of leisurely “unemployment.” . . . The disestablishment of our present professional structure could begin with the dropping out of the schoolteacher. (pp. 57-59)

Ultimately, Illich reasoned that if education is to be “for all,” it should be “by all” (1971, p. 14). With Vygotsky, Rogoff, Illich, and Falk, there seems to be an allowance that a student may have a “teacher” who is not physically present. Vygotsky (1978) and Rogoff (1991) saw this occurring as culture and social interaction that was interwoven in all learning. Illich (1971) was keen on having teaching occur through educational artifacts and networks that perhaps used audiotapes from skilled tradesmen. Falk (2005) simply states that free-choice learning usually has a teacher, but that teacher may not be present.

Within public libraries, the question then becomes, is the librarian a teacher? Are the materials in a library an educational artifact or a proxy for a teacher? With the above theories in mind, are children able to learn equally in a public library setting despite not having the same framework of a classroom, a teacher, and a specific curriculum? And, perhaps more to the point, do they *want* to learn in informal settings as much or more than in formal settings?

Motivation plays increased role in the Learning Society’s approach to reading.

Research confirms the role of teachers in motivating learners. Because the Learning Society opens up how, when, and where learning occurs, the role of motivation becomes even more notable. The role of the teacher as discussed above explains the significance of motivation from one important angle. As any parent who has “shopped” to find a kind and loving preschool or primary teacher for their child knows, the road to becoming a lifelong learner is greatly enhanced by a teacher who is supportive and motivating. Research agrees. There is widespread agreement that successful teachers

establish positive relationships with their students (Marinak & Gambrell, 2016; Pianta, 2006; Putman & Walker, 2010). Students who believe their teachers like them are likely to expend more effort in learning and be more academically successful. Brophy described autonomy-supportive teachers as ones who actively support their students by “understanding students’ perspectives, supporting their initiatives, creating opportunities for choice, being encouraging rather than demanding or directive and allowing students to work in their own way” (Brophy, 2010, p. 162). Further, Brophy shared a range of research studies that indicate such teachers had positive effects on student motivation and engagement as well as in some studies increasing the students’ academic progress (Brophy, 2010; Gambrell, Malloy, Marinak, & Mazzoni, 2015). Martin E. Ford (1992) emphasized that an individual acting as a facilitator in motivating a student must be sure that the goal is personally significant and appropriately challenging to the student.

These studies and theories dealt primarily with formal school settings, yet the teacher-student relationship they described fits closely with the free-choice and personally satisfying aspects of informal learning such as that studied by Putman and Walker (2010) and could also be found with the approach of children’s librarians in serving children. Moreover, McCombs (1991) and Ford (1992), alike, see the motivation of students as something that is not up to the facilitator or teacher to fix or impose. It is more a matter of *uncovering* the individual’s instinctual motivation to learn or *influencing* their motivation than *creating* motivation. This is to say that motivation to learn must be student-led—another key aspect to informal learning.

With the very nature of reading being tied to the socio-cultural context of language and print, the motivational role of the teacher is extremely important. Moreover,

because literacy learning happens well before formal schooling begins, the motivational role falls to the “teacher” within the family first. Shirley Brice Heath (1983) studied how the first adults in children’s lives—parents and older siblings—are extremely effective teachers of literacy. They operate within the zone of proximal development for the child, are open to the child’s individual goals in reading, and are able to effectively scaffold the child’s practice of reading throughout the day. The warmth of secure and affectionate bonds further motivates that child as they participate in literacy on the laps of family members, during bedtime reading rituals, or by participating in dialogic reading experiences that give the child some control over the reading and language experience.

Once the child is in school and receiving explicit instruction in literacy, interactions with sensitive and responsive teachers can predict improved literacy learning. In one study by Hamre and Pianta (2005), the positive relationship with the teacher was found to be more effective in learning to read than excellent instruction in letter-sound correspondence. In an era when teachers are being increasingly pressured to show that their students can achieve academic success on standardized goals and tests, it is interesting to note how important the role of motivating versus directly instructing those students can be.

Within libraries there are no reasonable avenues for assessing the role of the children’s librarian in motivating the children they assist. However, the analysis of what makes an effective motivating classroom teacher laid out above does serve to show the close match between the roles of teachers and children’s librarians in succeeding in the teaching of literacy. If the effectiveness of classroom teachers lies not in the direct instruction as much as in the positive relationship with their students and the power of the

parent or older sibling is effective in creating a predisposition to reading during the preschool years, then the role of children's librarians creating a warm, inviting, and pleasurable environment in a public library is similarly positioned to be powerful and effective.

Library's emphasis on pleasure and fun as effective motivation supported by research. Although children's librarians have always seen pleasure, free-choice, and access to a variety of materials as central in motivating children to become lifelong readers and, indeed, central to the library's mission (Ross, McKechnie, & Rothbauer, 2006), the Learning Society's emphasis on informal learning allowed those motivational factors to rise in importance. Whether conducting storytimes or providing readers advisory, the emphasis had not been just about providing fun for the fun of it, but as a way to motivate children to engage with print (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976). Incorporating all types of play into the children's rooms of public libraries has more recently been tied to the benefits in early literacy skills but, especially since the 1970s, there has been emphasis on providing at least a limited number of play experiences at the library. However, the reasoning during the 1970s was more likely to be that play was related to books and stories, such as play with puppets. Further, the children's librarians wanted to convey that the library was an inviting space. Ultimately, the emphasis on fun and pleasure in libraries always led back to the goal of creating lifelong readers and lovers of libraries. This was appropriate to creating lifelong readers as it made sure young readers found pleasure—short-term motivation—in the process of racking up the hours of reading practice and persistence needed for the mastering of reading (Krashen, 2004; Liu & Falk, 2014; Marinak & Gambrell, 2008; Ross et al., 2006). The British Cohort Study of

1970 as reported by Wilhelm and Smith (2014) followed over 17,000 people and found that pleasure reading out of school had a positive cognitive achievement effect three times greater than the effect of parents' educational level—a common proxy for how well students will do in reading. Literacy researcher Stephen Krashen (2004) began sharing his arguments and research on the effectiveness of what he termed *free voluntary reading* or FVR as early as 1993. He emphasized the significance of pleasure reading in the Learning Society stating, “those that do not develop the pleasure reading habit simply don’t have a chance—they will have a very difficult time reading and writing at a level high enough to deal with the demands of today’s world” (Krashen, 2004, p. x). What children’s librarians were doing to encourage reading in public libraries was well aligned to the demands of the Learning Society.

Teachers and parents, however, sometimes still demanded some kind of pedagogic guarantee that finding pleasure in reading would result in their child becoming proficient. For too long, they had been told to evaluate their child’s reading proficiency through their success in mastering specific decoding skills by a specific point in their progress as a reader. These were often measured by their scores on standardized tests or their “reading level” in programs such as Accelerated Reader which started in 1986 (Everhart, 2005). As evidenced from personal experience and reading of multiple postings on PUBYAC, the children’s librarians’ listserv, libraries began to face an uptick in the demands from parents that the book collections be arranged according to specific reading levels. This emphasis occurred in public and school libraries despite researchers such as Paris and Luo (2010) and Pressley (2002) pointing out how mastery of the skills touted as being scientifically proven as key to a child’s success in learning to read did no

more than show progress during a very limited beginning reading stage and did not necessarily carry over into long-term proficiency in reading. Again, children's librarians were put into a position of balancing demands from parents against long-held beliefs in a young reader's right to choose books despite their reading levels.

Learning Society theories espouse informal learning and public libraries. The 1970s were a time of the claiming of rights, rebelling against institutions, and thinking openly about traditional cultural views. Schools took a particularly hard hit with accusations from the national report *A Nation at Risk* of a "rising tide of mediocrity" (Gardner, 1983, p. 5). Ivan Illich (1971) proposed doing away with schools because they encouraged people to rely on them for their well-being rather than educating themselves. "Teaching, it is true," allowed Illich, "may contribute to certain kinds of learning under certain circumstances" (1971, p. 9). But, claimed Illich, "School, by its very nature, tends to make a total claim on the time and energies of its participants." (1971, p. 19). This, despite the fact that, as he points out, most learning takes place out of school. Further, he faulted schools for the way they take over "the money, men, and good will available for education and in addition discourage other institutions from assuming educational tasks" (1971, p. 7).

Illich's claims reflected a return to the more liberal Progressive Deweyan emphasis of the 1920s where education centered on the child (Long, 1969; Venezky & Kaestle, 2009). Although many saw Illich's views as extreme and easily dismissed, his contemporaries such as Paola Friere and John Caldwell Holt had philosophically similar views (Freedman & Marshall, 2003; Illich, 1971). Both Holt and Illich presented ideas for what education would look like outside of traditional schooling. Holt was in

considerable demand as a speaker and managed to garner a substantial following (Knight, 2003). However, unlike Illich, Holt was a conservative libertarian (Freedman & Marshall, 2003) and perhaps better aligned politically with those parents upset with formal schooling. John Caldwell Holt wrote *How Children Fail* in 1964 as the first of several books on the “unschooling” movement and is widely considered the father of homeschooling (Freedman & Marshall, 2003). Among his beliefs were that schools would not be able to reform effectively and that education became confined when it was defined as simply schooling (Sensenig, 2012). He thought children should be allowed to learn outside of schools and parents should teach them at home themselves (Knight, 2003). As this movement took off, homeschooling, in effect, became the free-choice learning Falk and Dierking (2002) described. Moreover, for homeschooling families, Holt saw libraries as offering freedom to learners which was especially important when and where schooling failed (Sensenig, 2012).

New technologies affect schools and public libraries. Of course, schools were the main target of crusaders such as Illich and Holt, but public libraries were also influenced. Since school libraries generally did not serve homeschooling families, public libraries became their *de facto* “school library.” Searches for professional articles describing how this was happening revealed multiple articles appearing in the 1980s and 1990s. Because homeschooling families frequently had religious reasons for homeschooling (Hess & Okun, 2003; Jeynes, 2007), children’s librarians steeled themselves to homeschooling parents’ criticisms of the library’s holdings that could be seen as blasphemous (Walter, 2001) or to the requests to put creationism books in the science sections. Yet, generally, the relationship between homeschooling families and

public libraries was reported to be increasingly positive and productive (Fitzgibbons, 2000; Sensenig, 2012; Walter, 2001). Illich (1971) and Holt (1964) clearly described their utopias as places where the best learning happened through the likes of public libraries and other informal learning community institutions, so, as libraries quietly continued their traditional roles, they were, in fact, accommodating unschooling and deschooling.

New technologies also blossomed in the 1970s and often affected schools and libraries. Apple started donating computers to California schools in 1983 (Cuban & Cuban, 2007), information and computer literacy became a concern for schools, and by the 1990s the World Wide Web was on the scene as well as other educational technologies (Cuban & Cuban, 2007; Fitzgibbons, 2000). Indeed, even on the homeschooling scene, the expanding technology was allowing more families to access the resources needed to teach their children from home (Hess & Okun, 2003). Public libraries, meanwhile, strove to embrace new technologies and supported leisure activities more extensively by welcoming popular new formats into their collections. They began circulating videotapes, audiotapes, compact discs, DVDs, and ebooks as soon as budgets would allow (Cuban & Cuban, 2007; Jones, 1979; Ross et al., 2006). Computer stations, however, were harder for libraries to provide in sufficient numbers, and it was not until the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provided assistance starting in the late 1990s that many libraries could begin to meet that demand (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2000; Cuban & Cuban, 2007). In fact, the increase in new technologies and new formats seemed to require a lot of attention and funding from both schools and libraries (Fitzgibbons, 2000).

Clashing education reforms swayed by government, publishing, and research. Within these contexts of new rebellions against schools and society, new formats encasing the library's collections of music, film, and literature, and new technology changing the way we communicated everywhere, the teaching of reading in American schools continued its established pattern of pendulum swings with the added urgency of popular media terming it "the literacy crisis" (Krashen, 2004, p. ix). Primarily, it was a back-and-forth between the teaching of reading as distinct skills through the look-say approach and phonics and the more child-centered approach of a focus on comprehension and child interests. The instructional approaches in the late 1960s and 1970s mostly centered around the use of basal reading programs with additional pedagogical guidance layered on to the teacher manuals with each successive edition (Pearson, 2002). This, even though Jeanne Chall's *The Learning Debate* and the *First Grades Studies*—both government-sponsored research projects published in 1967 on the effectiveness of reading—were clear that basal systems were not that effective and that individual reading approaches *without* use of basals would be more successful (Allington, 2002; Pearson, 2002). Literacy scholar P. David Pearson (2002) described the situation as teachers passing on reading knowledge and skills to passive students, using worksheets and tests to determine whether the students had mastered each particular skill on which the basal focused.

Whole Language in schools dovetails with public library's literacy education. Then came several new cognitive, sociolinguistic, and philosophical theories on how humans learn to speak, to read, and to write that changed reading instruction in America (Pearson, 2002; Sensenig, 2011). Instead of students being the submissive receivers of

reading skills such as phonics given to them by teachers and students then decoding print into set meaning, linguists began to see children as participating in how language worked and creating their own rules (Pearson, 2002). Linguists such as Kenneth Goodman and Frank Smith compared learning to read to learning to talk (Pearson, 2002). Would children learn to read if they were allowed to come to it naturally as they did in learning to speak? Smith, in his book *Understanding Reading* (1971), theorized that learning to read was not something you were taught. It was something you learned or “caught.” Further, Smith saw the function of the teacher as not “teaching,” but helping a child read. Hence, as Pearson (2002) pointed out, natural language patterns were needed in any beginning readers so students could relate to print as a form of natural, spoken language. This meant that basals would need to lose the controlled vocabulary (See Spot. See Spot run.) and other trappings of decoding that strayed from natural language (Pearson, 2002).

Another school of theory becoming popular in the United States during this period reframed reading as a social and cultural construction, making reading part of a much bigger universe of influences (Pearson, 2002). The new domain of cognitive psychology broke the reading process into constructs such as motivation and purpose with considerations of the attention, perception, and executive control processes needing to be considered (Pearson, 2002). Finally, schema theory aligned with Piaget’s division of learning into assimilation and accommodation and the need for reading to build on existing frameworks (Pearson, 2002). It was, in a way, an admission that reading must authentically reflect the reader’s experiences, both in and outside of the school day, to be meaningful and thus successful.

Authentic literature-based reading, an emphasis on comprehension, instruction relatable to the child's world, and writing as part of the process of learning to read were part of this new way of learning to read (Pearson, 2002). They were all folded into the whole language movement as a list of ways that children—holistically—successfully become readers. Once again, the schools were being asked to put the child at the center of the curriculum as had been done earlier in the century by John Dewey and other Progressives.

This movement gained strength in the 1980s, and a clear indication of its effect can be found in the changes that occurred in basals (Pearson, 2002). One might ask why basals were in the whole language classroom at all. Basals from the 1960s and 1970s were the antithesis of whole language philosophy. Authentic literature meant books, newspapers, magazines, lists, even comic books—anything that a child truly wanted to read—should be the reading material in the whole language classroom (Pearson, 2002). Book clubs and literature circles utilizing authentic children's literature replaced the worksheets and basal comprehension questions in whole language classrooms as Louise Rosenblatt's theories on reader response became popular. Her idea that meaning from reading was derived from a transaction between the reader and the text fit with constructivist approaches to reading (Pearson, 2002). As a result of such influences, boxed sets of trade books were created to replace basals (Pearson, 2002). Yet, when the 1988 California Reading Framework specified "genuine literature" (i.e., trade books) were to be used in the classrooms, textbook publishers moved quickly to try and prove that that was what could now be found through the insertion of children's literature selections into their new and improved basal readers (Pearson, 2002). Adaptations of

classic stories and controlled vocabulary of past basal readers fell away, and comprehension activities increased dramatically (Pearson, 2002). This is what the whole language movement looked like in the reading classrooms of the 1980s and 1990s.

Meanwhile, children's librarians in the public library were often only aware of what was going on in the schools when they scrambled to help parents or teachers who came in looking for specific materials (Walter, 2001) or when they took the initiative to inform themselves (Ross, 2009; Soltan, 2010). Yet, the connection to whole language was there. As Ross listed the different philosophical models of how humans learn to read, she ultimately laid it out that children's librarians "are more valued as allies of reading within the meaning-emphasis" framework such as that of whole language (2009, p. 645). However, the schools were switching lanes on how to teach reading more abruptly than those outside the educational world could keep up. I can personally vouch for the glimmers of this swerving that came through when teachers dashed in to gather as many copies of a popular trade fiction book as they could find at each branch library in order to create a free, temporary "boxed set" for their classrooms. I can also vouch for the parents who were more familiar with the phonics approach of their childhoods and so were confused as they tried to find easy readers that represented their child's level and still matched the teacher's whole language suggestions of books with predictable clues and illustrations that gave context. Finally, I can remember parents asking to be directed to a section of just phonics books as they panicked that their child would lose out during what they considered the latest passing fad in reading instruction.

For children's librarians who did become aware of the whole language movement, a frequent reaction was that it sounded like reading instruction just became a whole lot

more like public libraries—plenty of good children’s books, plenty of choice, and plenty of reading for pleasure and meaning (Ross, 2009; Soltan, 2010). I personally experienced this when in 1982 I chose to take a graduate course in the fundamentals of the reading process. I was astonished how much of what I learned about this way of understanding reading from Frank Smith and New Zealand educator Marie Clay sounded like the premises underlying public library service to children. But, as Dorothy Broderick (1977) pointed out, during this time period, many children’s librarians were not so worried about children reading the very best of the classics or attaining discrete skills as they were worried about children wanting to read anything—anything at all. Whole language seemed to be an approach that addressed that concern in the schools. That seemed, to a lot of us in the profession, a good thing for the most part.

However, the basal with its “tried and true” skills-based and phonics approach had been around for so long it had taken on an almost religious aura (Allington, 2002). At the very least, it was considered representative of the “back to basics” agenda and thus, a good thing and whole language a bad thing (Allington, 2002). Others focused on experiential research that looked only at the beginning stages of reading and saw phonics as a scientifically proven approach. And thus, the “reading wars” raged.

Children’s librarians’ roles evolve to accommodate demands of the times.

The rapid change from basals and a skills approach to the whole language approach did leave many children’s librarians unaware of what was at stake in the so-called “reading wars.” All the while they were basically supportive of the “whole language” movement simply by their adherence to their mission although they were outwardly careful to avoid the politics. The children’s room collections represented both camps of reading

instruction in the types of early reading materials placed there, and staff quickly learned how to direct the parent who only wanted a phonics approach to suitable early readers while also having booklists to hand out to parents who wanted books that aligned with whole language. These accommodations to both approaches reflected the changes in their roles that the profession, as a whole was making. Through the Public Library Association's *Planning for Results* program, they were broadening their focus from being the "preschooler's door to learning" to multiple roles such as basic literacy, formal education support center, and lifelong learning (Walter, 2001, p. 12). The American Library Association officially espoused educational objectives (Ross et al., 2006). With those new roles, they were finding that they had to reshape programs to serve all of their users. They began to increase their outreach to the underserved even more than they did during the War on Poverty in the 1960s and the service to tenement families in the '20s. As more families had all adults involved in the workforce (Kamerman & Gatenio-Gabel, 2007), children's librarians reshaped storytelling and storytime programs to accommodate groups from childcare centers, both on and off site. They added programs for toddlers and infants as parents shortened the number of years they stayed home with new babies and were freer to come to library programs. As more parents were choosing to homeschool their children or move their children to charter schools, children's librarians were having to meet demands for curriculum materials as well as become those families' *de facto* school library. Moreover, the first version of the Association of Library Services to Children's (ALSC, 1989) List of Competencies for Children's Librarians had just come out in 1989, and the exhaustive list had children's librarians now clearly responsible for not only collection development, programs, and readers advisory, but also

for marketing, publicity, outreach, collaboration with other youth agencies, multicultural sensitivity, and understanding child development. It was a long list, yet it would only be in much later editions (2009) that there would be any overt mention of children's librarians being literacy educators.

Meanwhile, librarians in school libraries and media centers were being asked to handle the growth of technology in schools as well as instruction in information skills, the usual collection development and maintenance, and an increased emphasis on collaboration with individual classroom teachers (Fitzgibbons, 2000; Sensenig, 2011). This occurred despite the fact that school libraries were losing ground and being ignored when the monies from federal grants and laws were being distributed (Fitzgibbons, 2000; Sensenig, 2011, 2012). And, this occurred even as the professional organization responded with compelling evidence of the importance of the school libraries in responding to *A Nation at Risk*'s warnings about literacy (Jeynes, 2007; Lance, Welborn, & Hamilton-Pennell, 1992).

Then, in 1996, a proverbial fork in the road appeared, and a decision was made for which direction libraries would take. Under the Clinton administration, all libraries in America were removed from the Department of Education where they had resided since 1956 and enfolded with museums into the Institute for Museums and Library Services (IMLS) (Frankel, 1997). The move was described as a bureaucratic move that in some ways isolated cultural institutions that would now have to make a more vehement case for receiving increasingly scarce public funds (Frankel, 1997). Others pointed out the irony of libraries moving forward on technology only to be grouped with "dusty" museums (Frankel, 1997, p. 35). Others asked whether libraries were no longer to be considered

part of education (Frankel, 1997; Kniffel, 1997). Still others saw the regrouping as an advantageous way to avoid being a target of cuts from Congress when they started trimming the massive education budget (Frankel, 1997). In some ways, the excising of libraries from the Department of Education and the melding of it with museums to form the IMLS provided a recognition of the library as an informal learning place, rather than a formal learning place (Frankel, 1997; St. Lifer, 1998). Indeed, the stated task for IMLS was to go forth and create a new network for lifelong learning together (Martens & Latham, 2016).

It was during the period of 1970 to 2000 when the whole language approach to reading instruction began to affect school curriculums around the country that children's librarians' path as literacy educators began to align with the schools once again. For the most part, children's librarians were not well-versed in whole language, but the parents' and teachers' demands on the collection called it to their attention. Nor, thanks in large part to the involvement of politics and textbook publishing, was whole language able to make an indelible path on literacy instruction in the country. Instead, this period experienced the zigs and zags of educational reform leaving teachers, parents, and children's librarians hopping to keep up with the flavor of the day in literacy instruction. Still, whole language can be credited with giving children's librarians the first taste of research that validated their role in creating lifelong readers, especially as the professionals that readied preschool children for school. Just before the turn of the 21st Century, children's librarians began to see how clearly their jobs aligned with educational standards and began to demand a place at the table as funding for education was being discussed. They began to see that early brain development research was validating their

role, especially in working with preschoolers. Meanwhile, children's programming was exploding. Surveys of library users were expressing warm appreciation for the role of children's services, even to the point of saying that maybe technology would reduce the need for public libraries in the future, but services like the library's storytime would always have a place in society (Benton Foundation, 1996). Some in the profession started doing research on the effectiveness of public libraries and children's services and urged the professional organizations to support their efforts with white papers supporting the role of children's librarians. By the time one public library director (Gross, 2013) took the radical move of renaming all children's librarians "instructors" in 2007, the initial gasps barely had time to dissipate before the topic was being discussed in new, more accepting ways.

At the same time, early childhood education was coming into its own. Increasingly, both parents were in the workforce, and the need for childcare grew. Children's librarians accommodated the demographic shifts by lowering the age for attending storytimes to ages 3 to 5, and then lowering it again to toddlers, and then again to infants sitting on parents' laps. Both preschools and kindergartens became more common, and the government began working on creating early childhood goals and standards for the country. The profession of children's librarianship responded by creating and launching the most significant initiative since the beginning of the profession—Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library (ECRR). And, the profession, from 2001 to 2018, turned. Through ECRR, children's librarians gradually embraced the importance of research in their work, their role as educators of the very young, and, most especially, their role as educators of parents.

Early childhood moves to the front of education and the top of children's librarians' duties. Attention was being directed to the role of early childhood education generally and early literacy specifically in addressing the nation's literacy concerns (Roskos & Vukelich, 2006). Early Headstart, serving children from birth to age 3, was launched in 1994; Headstart was reauthorized in 1998, and the No Child Left Behind legislation of 2001 included the Early Reading First component (Roskos & Vukelich, 2006). These events correlated with the number of children enrolled in preschools and kindergartens rising exponentially. By 1999, the percentage of 3- and 4-year-olds in preschool had increased to over 50% in 1999 from about 5% in 1964 (Jamieson, Curry, & Martinez, 2001, p. 2). Further, 94% of 5-year-olds were enrolled in school in 2008, and 72% of those were enrolled in full-day kindergarten (United States Census Bureau, 2011, p. 5) as compared to 28% in 1978. Research began to highlight how these children did in later schooling with several key research studies leading the pack: Hart and Risley's 1995 *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*; Snow, Burns, and Griffin's 1998 *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*; and Phillips and Shonkoff's National Research Council's 2000 *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*.

These events can be placed within the larger context of the nation continuing to react to the perception of a literacy crisis that began with the response to the *Nation at Risk* report in 1983. Not only was there concern about how schools were addressing this "crisis," but there was an accompanying organic shift away from having schools answer only to local school boards and communities as they had since the mid-19th Century (Alexander & Fox, 2004). Now they were answering to federal and state governments

who were providing funds, but with strings demanding accountability through the establishing of standards and testing. The litany of legislation that followed in the next 30 years reflected the new normal of government imposing its influence on education. A key example of this can be found in the 1989 event where governors from all states met in Charlottesville, Virginia and established Goals 2000, a multiyear plan with eight goals to improve schools (Roskos & Vukelich, 2006). Two of those goals recognized the significance of early literacy—school readiness and parental participation (Roskos & Vukelich, 2006). It was, in fact, also a recognition that not all learning occurs within school. Moreover, the movement to create standards at the state level expanded gradually until by 2004, 34 states had put early learning standards alongside and in alignment with newly established K-12 standards (Roskos & Vukelich, 2006).

While the educational reforms starting with Head Start (1965) and Early Head Start (1994) and moving on through early reading policies such as Early Reading First, a component of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and Good Start, Grow Smart (started in 2002 by President George W. Bush) manifested the government's mounting concern for early literacy, school districts at the state level were slower and more limited in how quickly they could respond with programs (Roskos & Vukelich, 2006). Within the states, one way this new emphasis on early literacy could be seen was through the codification of research-based elements of early literacy such as oral language and phonemic awareness into states' early learning standards (Roskos & Vukelich, 2006).

In public libraries at that time, the response to the burgeoning interest in early literacy looked very different. Public libraries have been and still are the only free public educational institution that serves citizens from birth on; hence, they had already

accepted their role in preparing children for school. In the 1980s and 1990s, many libraries focused specifically on school readiness as a primary mission (Walter, 2001). As both parents began entering the workforce and more 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old preschool children were in preschools, day care, or kindergarten, the need for programs for even younger audiences such as baby and toddler storytimes became obvious, and libraries obliged. When reports from early literacy researchers, such as William Teale (1995), and Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998), were published demonstrating the potency of reading aloud to young children and the importance of experiences in the first three years of life for learning to read, children's librarians' focus and goals for early literacy were affirmed. As librarians Steven Herb and Sarah Willoughby-Herb wrote,

It seems important to state the obvious—literacy, especially early literacy training for young children, should take place where the primary means of providing literacy instruction reside. The means are children's books, and their primary home in our culture for the past 100 years has been the public library. . . . One might conclude that every community serviced by a public library should make that library an integral part of any plan designed to be community-wide and comprehensive, because the nature of public library service is to meet the specific needs of the individuals in the whole community that library serves. (2000, pp. 3-4)

Of course, informal learning's role in early childhood education was much broader than that of just the library. One of the most important sources for early childhood learning is the home. Formal education was slow to recognize this. Curriculum-controlling reports such as the National Reading Panel in 2000 ignored

studies that evaluated the parents' role in attaining literacy (Allington, 2002; Pressley, 2002). Moreover, a member of the committee, Joanne Yatvin, filed a minority report on the lack of early literacy educators on the panel (Pressley, 2002). The early childhood governors group listed recognition of the role of the family in preparing a child for school as one of the key principles, but there were no teeth to make anything happen (Roskos & Vukelich, 2006). Several informal learning educators pointed out that informal learning is much more comfortable with incorporating the family and the family environment into the learning experience than are schools. Museums, for example, have long expected that the family will come together to visit exhibits and, hence, that learning experience must be designed for all ages and for the interaction between different family members.

The last 30 years of the 20th Century was not a period where stable roles of children's librarians as educators clearly emerged, but it was one of great change moving in that direction. The Learning Society that gradually replaced the Industrial Society shook up traditional ideas about formal education and the transmission of knowledge that became support for the idea of informal learning. Spokespersons for the change included theorists such as Illich and Holt and theories such as constructivism and new domains such as cognitive psychology. Technological changes and a global economy also helped to change learning into something much bigger than time spent in school. Lifelong learning, both in and out of school, became the framework for how Americans were learning as well as what it meant to be a teacher facilitating that learning and how the role of pleasure as motivation effectively stimulated learning. Literacy instruction in the schools during this time wavered considerably from one government-imposed reform to the next, with whole language being the most noteworthy one towards the end of the

century. Libraries, meanwhile, were not significantly well informed nor affected by the reforms, but they did continue their mission of an emphases on authentic literature, reading for pleasure, and reading by choice that happened to be the signposts of whole language as taught in the schools. Libraries also became more tied to informal learning at this time when they were removed from the Department of Education and moved into the Institute for Museum and Library Sciences in 1996. Finally, research into early childhood education flourished and revealed the importance of the preschool years in creating proficient readers, a time in life when children were only receiving informal education. The formal education world began to take notice, but public libraries were already positioned as being the preschoolers' door to education. The new emphasis on early literacy (Bohrer, 2005) fit well with the direction the library was already headed. It was as if the journey of the last 124 years had come to an intersection where the three paths of formal literacy learning, informal literacy learning, and literacy learning at the public library were all focused on the same forces that create a path to lifelong reading.

Conclusion and Implications for the Future

Children's librarianship has always appealed to me for the gentle way that it invites children to become readers. The motto of "the right book for the right child at the right time" seemed so very forward thinking when I first encountered it in library school in 1971. As decades in the profession passed, I kept being struck by how I could see and experience every day how powerful even this gentle encouragement could be in creating readers. It led me to wonder how much my profession paralleled that of classroom teachers, and how my fellow library professionals felt about their roles as literacy educators. Could something be learned by how these questions were answered throughout

history? Additionally, would a retrospective view allow us to look further down the road for the library profession and learn from the past?

Teachers and children's librarians in the late 19th Century each wanted to help create lifelong learners in a more targeted way than society had been doing through informal learning in the home. This was expressed in the early years as wanting to create moral and upright citizens who read only the best literature. As behaviorism and progressivism alternated their influences, teachers were told to focus on creating the product of a graduate who could succeed in a job. Children's librarians were more freely allowed to focus on the interests of the child as they, too, worked to help children be successful in society. To accomplish their similar goals, the two professions evolved and defined their varying roles in the process. This ultimately meant that the focus on issues such as direct instruction, discrete reading skills, and testing required in schools came to diverge at times from the pleasure, choice, access, and intrinsic motivation to learn that was the focus in public libraries, specifically, and in informal learning, generally. For a while, it also meant that children's librarians downplayed their roles as educators when that identity appeared to threaten their commitment to reading as pleasurable.

The era of the Learning Society arriving late in the 20th Century accommodated a more global perspective and a more omnipresent role of learning than was present in the first century of these two institutions. This has meant that schools were gradually becoming more accepting of the importance of informal learning such as in preschool years and in family literacy. Public libraries, meanwhile, are more clearly owning their powerful place as centers of informal learning where even if reading is purposefully fun, it is still legitimately educational. In different ways, more current research and theory on

literacy are causing the two paths to overlap. For example, the research-based effectiveness of independent reading in children becoming proficient readers (i.e., the same way children's librarians encourage reading) is increasingly being promoted for formal schooling. As the future of education is predicted to be more individualized and technology-driven, both teachers and children's librarians are recognizing the swelling demand for informal learning. In effect, at the turn of the new century, these three paths came to a place where their travelers may not have been on the very same road, but they could more clearly see and acknowledge each other from where they were standing. More importantly, they could see how they each represent a narrower path on the broader road of lifelong learning. For libraries, this is especially significant. Rarely in the past were librarians called upon to announce their roles as purveyors of informal education. Real worth seemed to be defined by pointing out their alignment with formal education (Sensenig, 2012). The Learning Society's marketplace of ideas, information, and continuous learning is helping to reframe that situation and recognize the force of informal learning. Public libraries would do well to embrace this alliance.

Will children's librarianship be able to maintain its commitment to "reading as fun" into the future? The profession started by straddling the paths of formal and informal learning. Even when the paths moved apart, children's librarians stayed committed to the goals more in alignment with informal learning—teaching children to love reading. This suggests that even as children's librarians of the new millennium find themselves hailed as early literacy educators with curriculums and standards, they will hold to learning and reading as pleasurable. Learning to read is a complex interactive social and cultural process, and each child comes to it with his or her own unique background, goals, and

individual ways of learning. This historical journey solidifies that teachers *and* children's librarians—*and* parents—are critical in making that individual journey successful.

There remain, however, some questions for the future that the leaders of children's librarianship may want to address. This historical survey comes to a stop at the turn of the 21st Century. It was then that children's librarianship embarked on a significantly wider path. In 2000, the Every Child Ready to Read @Your Library (ECRR) initiative took shape and rapidly spread throughout the country (Ash & Meyers, 2009). The influence that ECRR exerted on children's librarianship deserves significant attention and research. It is true that children's librarians were already announcing they were the "preschoolers' door to learning" (Walter, 2001, p. 12) and already creating programs for preschoolers and even toddlers (Heaviside & Farris, 1995) before the year 2000. However, there were several key directions they had not yet taken. Namely, as is summarized in the evaluations of the ECRR (Neuman & Celano, 2010; Neuman et al., 2017), this major initiative taught us that we need to be intentionally teaching and involving parents, rather than excluding them from the storytime room. We need to partner with community organizations to reach all of our community, rather than insisting everyone should come to our building. We need to embrace research as the guiding light for doing what we do best even better. Finally, we need to evolve our professional identity to include the primary role of educator, because that is what we are, and ECRR is demonstrating that to us and our communities.

A recent forum on the future of public libraries (Foote, 2014; Kim, 2014) emphasized that the future of education will require libraries to fully participate in the new individualized, technology-based, lifespan-long approach to learning that resides

largely outside formal schools (Zhao, 2009). I submit that a crucial and much-needed step to prepare for that direction is a major reconstruction of the graduate school curriculum for children's librarians. If children's librarians are to be effective educators, they should be able to depend on their graduate school education to prepare them for that. Included would be the theoretical groundings and research-based practices of effective literacy learning and, especially, the role of motivation. Perhaps, then, the emphasis on "fun" in reading, library experiences, and learning generally can be debated and fully validated as a legitimate and effective way to create lifelong readers.

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CHAPTER V

GUARDIANS OF THE FUN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF CHILDREN'S LIBRARIANS AS LITERACY EDUCATORS

Abstract

This set of studies examined children's librarians' self-perceptions as literacy educators, identified consensus, and considered influences on the future of the profession. In Stage 1 of the research, an analysis of open-ended survey responses suggests observable change, and strong feelings were associated with the topic. The majority of survey respondents were not comfortable being called teacher, with the issue of teaching roles dividing the responses into three distinct categories: comfortable with a teaching role; uncomfortable with it; and comfortable with facilitating learning, but choosing to use language other than "teach" or "teacher." In addition, 75% of the respondents felt fun was a critical component of reading and the library experience for children. Stage 2 of the research used a composite case study to examine contextual reasons for discomfort with a teaching role. Lack of preparation to teach, fears of having the same frustrations teachers face in their jobs, and the diminishing of fun were all concerns related to this discomfort. Stage 3 of the research used a multiple case study approach by interviewing children's librarians who had education-related job titles, exploring whether and how the three concerns showed up in their jobs. Results include several areas needing to be addressed by the field: (1) widespread frustration with the inadequacies of the MLS degree, (2) lack

of research on the role Every Child Ready to Read plays in shaping the profession, (3) the continuation of an emphasis on fun, even when combined with learning, and (4) the importance of informal learning for the role of children's librarians in the future. Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (1962) was used to inform the process of adapting to change in the field and emphasized the importance of maintaining core values.

Introduction—An Anecdote

My ears did not perk up when I heard “and the winner of the Teacher of the Year Award is Hannah . . .” I was a children's librarian attending the first day of a national literacy conference and, as a librarian, I was feeling a bit out of place there surrounded by mainly classroom educators. There was little chance I would know the teacher earning the award. I had just entered the back of the large ballroom and chosen a seat at a white cloth-covered round table with four other conference attendants whom I had not yet met. My 35-plus years as a children's librarian in public libraries meant I had rarely attended anything but library conferences. But, as someone embarking on a doctoral degree to explore how children learn to read and how children's librarians play a role in that process, I was determined to mine conferences that gave me a more wholistic view of literacy. Indeed, I had traveled across the country to attend this conference for the first time and on my own dime.

“ . . . Hannah Kacey, children's librarian at the Easton Public Library System!!!” The crowd applauded, and my mouth fell open. I did not know Hannah, but did they say a children's librarian at a public library was being named Teacher of the Year at a national literacy conference? I felt like they had just introduced someone from another planet.

What had she done to win the award? Did this literacy organization regularly recognize librarians for this award? Was there more to the story that would explain how she earned this national award that, without qualifications, says “teacher”? I halfway expected those around me whom I presumed to be classroom teachers to be equally shocked and perhaps dismayed.

Hannah graciously accepted the award. The presenters briefly described her accomplishments with a library outreach program to day care providers in partnership with a local university. As she left the stage, I craned to see where she had returned to her seat so I could find her afterwards and ask the questions that were arising in rapid succession.

My surprise at Hannah receiving a teacher award was not that it was not befitting. It was that in my experience, there was ambiguity both inside and outside of the children’s librarian profession concerning children’s librarians having a teaching role. Indeed, in my previous life as a supervisor of children’s librarians I had faced from them a range of responses from considerable resistance to budding eagerness to adopt an educational role.

Thus began my journey to understand a significant change my profession is experiencing. The following study will document three stages of research on the issue of children’s librarians’ perception of their educator roles: (a) a basic qualitative study of survey responses; (b) a composite case study based on 71 responses from the survey data; and (c) a multiple case study based on five additional interviews with children’s librarians who have education-related jobs.

Purpose

Hannah's award made me question whether my experiences were as common as I had thought and if the acceptance of children's librarians as literacy educators was changing. The list of competencies for children's librarians provided by the Association of Library Services for Children (ALSC) (ALSC, 1989, 1999, 2009, 2015), and the literature found in its professional journal, *Children and Libraries*, had little to offer in explaining the children's librarian's recent role in literacy education (Benke, 2015). The purpose of this study was to use qualitative methods of study to provide insights into these research questions:

- Q1 How do children's librarians see their role within literacy education?
- Q2 How do they feel about that role?
- Q3 Where is there obvious consensus?
- Q4 How might this influence the future of the profession?

Framework and Other Considerations

Philosophical Framework

For the theoretical framework, the parameters of this study fit well with social constructivism as defined and applied by Vygotsky (1978). Creswell's summation of social constructivism includes that "Multiple realities are constructed through our lived experiences and interactions with others" (Creswell, 2013, p. 36). Because of my career as a children's librarian for over 35 years, I too struggled with understanding the role I played in the education world. Like many children's librarians, I wanted only to encourage children in their learning, not to direct their studies or judge them and that often appeared to be what teachers did in the schools. However, my understanding of the

educator role was markedly reconstructed and broadened when I taught pre-service teachers as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. Thus, this social constructivism methodology approach recognized the influence of my personal experiences and informed my interpretation of the data.

In qualitative research, it is common to address subjects through interviews, surveys, and case studies. Moreover, children's librarians are typically comfortable with the use of surveys in their work as a way to gather patron evaluations of programs and services. Fink (2003) illuminated the process of shaping a study through the use of open-ended surveys advocating for a survey's ability to examine feelings, values, and opinions of a group. She also pointed out the usefulness of this approach for moving a research topic closer to being studied through a more quantitative, closed-ended survey. Thus, by using an open-ended survey I moved this research topic closer to being able to be studied through a quantitative close-ended survey or other quantitative methods.

The Use of Personal Pronouns

The question of how to refer to the gender of a group such as librarians presents unique challenges. Children's librarianship is 11.7% male according to one job website, (*Here's how to become A children's librarian in 2019*, 2019) and an average of 9.32% according to percentages shared from five medium to large systems reported through personal communication with PUBYAC listserv subscribers (personal communications, May 22-28, 2019). Suggestions of respecting a group's preference for personal pronouns as advised by American Psychological Association (APA) style (American Psychological Association, 2010) was not possible in this study since preference and gender were not questions asked on the survey. Therefore, where possible, the personal pronouns used

were “they” or the statement was reframed to avoid personal pronouns. Since the silhouettes and interviewees have been assigned names that are typically associated with one gender or the other, the discussion of their stories used the corresponding gender pronouns. If there were other uses of personal pronouns beyond these situations that required a singular personal pronoun, the default was the female pronoun since the profession is predominantly female.

Literature Review

When public libraries in America began in earnest in 1876, children’s librarians were a small, but propitious, part of them (Dana, 1896; Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976). At the very start, library leaders such as John Cotton Dana and Melvil Dewey were clear that public libraries were a part of the educational world (Dana, 1896; Dewey, 1989) with Dana proclaiming that libraries were “a center of public happiness first, of public education next” (1896, p. 3). Horace Mann was convinced that libraries for the public were needed for the education of the community and, thus, his common school movement included libraries in the schools and made them open to the general public (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976; Mann, 1840; Powell, 1917; Sensenig, 2011). Others spoke of the first third of the 20th Century as a time when libraries co-existed with school in creating moral and upright citizens (Long, 1969; Lopez, 1976; Powell, 1917). However, when the Russians launched Sputnik in 1957, there was a backlash against any education that was not deemed scientific and able to be tested in the hopes that such rigor would put the United States ahead in the space race (Walker, 2008). The use of phonics was seen as the more efficient method for literacy instruction at the time and, as it gained hold in the schools, the importance of the public library in literacy instruction was diminished since

it was not able to be proven through testing. Moreover, with phonics instruction being proudly touted as an efficient mechanized process, children's librarians were willing to separate their identity from that of classroom teachers (Benke, 2019) in order to keep their image of inviting children to enjoy reading. This situation continued until the '70s when a more holistic approach to reading instruction occurred through the whole language movement (Pearson, 2002). In several ways, whole language in the classroom paralleled public library service to children: read only authentic literature (not primers), put emphasis on reading for pleasure and meaning, provide a wide array of materials, and relegate direct instruction in specific decoding skills to be used only as needed (Ross, 2009). Although children's librarians were generally not specifically aware of whole language instruction, its brief and sporadic shaping of literacy instruction in classrooms did serve to promote research on the same techniques that libraries used and, thus, opened the door for children's librarians to once again recognize their roles as literacy educators.

On another front, the research on early brain and early childhood development was burgeoning at the end of the century and pointing expressly to the importance of early literacy experiences. Researchers Neuman and Celano (2010) gave an overview of the solid research basis for public library services such as reading to young children on a regular basis, introducing children to a variety of books, engaging in literacy-related play, and educating parents and caregivers in doing all of these activities as well. Further, Neuman and Celano highlighted the substantial research showing the effectiveness of "the caregiver who evokes children's interest and engagement in literacy learning" in furthering literacy learning (p. 9). Children's librarians lightheartedly refer to it as making the library experience fun for kids, but the research has underpinned the effect

that reading for pleasure has in creating readers. In fact, concurrent research on several topics—such as the role of motivation, choice, access, and independent reading in becoming a proficient reader (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2013; Gambrell, 2002; Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni, 2011; Krashen, 2004)—were all also pointing to the things that public libraries did best as the parent education initiative Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library (ECRR) came on to the scene.

Meanwhile, the professional literature for children's librarians had not yet recovered from the mid-century reluctance of children's librarians to call themselves educators. Professional articles abounded over the learning that was occurring for children in library programs, but the children's librarian was not given credit. Around the turn of the century, a variety of sources in the professional literature started recognizing the contradiction of the situation. Kathleen Reif (2000) cautioned that children's librarians had better figure out their roles in education before someone else did it for them. Well-known literacy researcher Susan B. Neuman (Glick, 2001) scolded children's librarians for knowing a lot about early literacy, yet not sharing it directly, regularly, and even spontaneously with parents. Lance and Marks (2008) surveyed research showing positive relationships between public library services and early reading success. Directors of two public library systems changed their systems' strategic plans to clearly align with learning—both formal and informal—and gave new names for their jobs that moved away from "librarian" and, instead, used terms that positioned them as guides and a variety of educator titles for that learning (Gross, 2013; Sandlian-Smith, 2011).

Around the same time, research was being done on how libraries were the most popular second career choice for those leaving the teaching profession (Lambert &

Newman, 2012). Other research investigated how much actual teaching was being expected of librarians in academic libraries and questioned whether they were supported in professional development to do it well (Julien & Genuis, 2009). In a study of neighborhood libraries, the question was asked whether the learning at public libraries related to the curriculum at school (Ward & Wason-Ellam, 2005). Finally, Sensenig (2011) recognized the effects of political changes in literacy education to the changes in children's programming in libraries.

However, it was the introduction of the Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library initiative in 2001 that most clearly created a shift in how children's librarians saw themselves in the world of literacy education. The program was sparked by a collaboration between the Association for Library Services to Children and the Public Library Association which then used the guidance of literacy researchers Neuman and Celano to create curriculum packages and training modules, pilot the program, then distribute it and the training throughout the country (Ash & Meyers, 2009). Billed as a parent education initiative, it initially faced resistance by children's librarians who only wanted to work with children and were resistant to the idea of teaching (Neuman & Celano, 2010; Neuman et al., 2017). Despite this, Every Child Ready to Read slowly but surely encouraged children's librarians to recognize how they were already doing what the research said needed to be done, and that their 30-minute-a-week storytimes were not going to have the impact that was needed to make a difference in a child's life. The message was that children's librarians needed to become educators of parents and caregivers. In that period from 2001 to the present, Every Child Ready to Read helped a revolution begin. In this study, I strove to understand whether that revolution can

continue to grow and whether renewal of children's librarians/roles as literacy educators will be accepted.

Overview of Studies

The following study was designed to move an initial understanding of the problem (children's librarians have very mixed feelings about being considered teachers.), to one focused on the most relevant issues (certain issues shape how children's librarians feel about being teachers.) and, finally, to their application in the field of children's librarianship of the future (concerns expressed by children's librarians about being educators are being addressed in settings where their educator role is clearly emphasized.). Therefore, there are three stages to the research design used:

- Stage 1: A basic qualitative pilot study using a survey with open-ended questions on how children's librarians perceive their role as literacy educators
- Stage 2: A composite case study further exploring 71 responses from the Stage 1 survey, categorizing them into four groups according to their varying attitudes about teaching in their work
- Stage 3: A multiple case study using interviews with five children's librarians who have job titles or job descriptions overtly defining them as educators.

The process, rationales, and methods for each step are described in this chapter.

Stage 1—Qualitative Pilot Study

Stage 1 Purpose

In a pilot study, I conducted a basic qualitative study to gather data on the circumstances and feelings connected to children's librarians' self-perceptions as literacy educators. My purpose was to find out how widespread concern over the issue was and

where there was or was not agreement. Finally, I wondered if the issue had an impact on how children's librarians see their roles shifting in the future of public libraries.

Stage 1 Methodology

In 2015, I launched a basic qualitative study (Benke, 2015) by posting a survey request and link to the Qualtrics online survey tool through PUBYAC (see Appendix A), the respected worldwide listserv for public librarians serving young adults and children. The "Great Brain," as the listserv is known, had over 6,000 subscribers at the time (VanHemert, 2014). In my posting, I asked children's librarians to take an open-ended online survey on the if and how they saw themselves as literacy educators. The 26-question survey (see Appendix B) included two demographic questions asking for the respondent's age and time worked in the field to establish a time context in which to place the other open-ended answers. Otherwise, the questions focused on gathering qualitative, rather than quantitative, data and provided ample space for comments. I wanted to hear the opinions and personal experiences of the respondents and, thus, understand more about the phenomena, patterns, and themes occurring within the profession around this issue.

Stage 1 Analysis

Eighty-five responses came in within the two weeks the survey was available, and the open-ended responses were replete with thoughtful, witty, and impassioned perceptions with an undercurrent of affection for library work with children. In analyzing the data for this unpublished basic qualitative study (Benke, 2015), I discovered multiple themes and patterns throughout the merged picture of all respondents that will be reported in more detail below. A content analysis approach (Jansen, 2010) which

included the significance of word and punctuation choices such as avoiding the use of the word “teach” or using exclamation points to show the intensity of feelings was applied to the total results of the survey through use of color-coding, formatting, and arranging in Word documents. Through a balancing act of analysis, open-ended coding, and re-analysis, I identified major themes and categories.

Stage 1 Findings

In analyzing the data for this unpublished basic qualitative study (Benke, 2015), I found majority agreements from the pilot survey respondents on a few themes:

- storytime was the place where teaching most often took place
- the idea of overtly promoting storytimes as educational was unpopular
- “teacher” was a descriptor they would definitely avoid
- “educator” was a title a majority could live with
- all but one respondent felt they were prepared for the parts of their job that involved teaching early literacy to children and their family or caregivers.

Finally, perhaps the clearest finding throughout the entire body of data was the constant infusion by three-fourths of the respondents that fun is central to the library experience. Otherwise, respondents aligned into three or more camps on other issues. The substantial division of opinions indicated to me that the field was in the process of change and raised the question of what influences could be associated with the division into different camps. These findings served as a cursory answer to the first three research questions regarding children’s librarians’ perceptions, feelings, and agreement on their educator roles.

Stage 1 Discussion

The totaling of responses in this pilot study did little to help with understanding why other issues did not align into majorities or pluralities. Who are these individuals, why did they vary across the issues, and what other factors were involved in their responses? This seemed particularly important to understand since the responses appeared to be divided into three or more distinct camps on several issues, suggesting the profession was in the midst of a change. One of the benefits of this pilot survey was that it led me to further research, where I sought to elaborate on and further explain the conflict (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Also, the wide spectrum of responses in the data caused me to be curious as to whether or not those who were comfortable with teaching felt that way in all situations, if they shared other similarities with the other respondents who felt the same way about teaching, and whether their specific concerns would be shared by others. Moreover, were the majority of respondents who disliked being compared to teachers the same ones who felt strongly that library experiences should be fun? Or, did that resisting group feel unprepared to teach and, thus, were uncomfortable with that label? If I compared the comments of each respondent across the entirety of their survey, would an alignment of answers place respondents into a group with commonalities that could then be discussed as a composite case such as is defined by Creswell (2013)? A composite case study analysis of the survey data using the a priori codes suggested by the pilot study was needed to parse out backgrounds, experiences—even intensity of feelings—and group the survey respondents in a deeper and more richly descriptive array.

Stage 2 Research—Composite Case Study

Stage 2 Purpose

Following the basic qualitative study of 85 survey responses, I initiated a composite case study as defined by Creswell (2013) to further explore the reasons for the wide disparity in comfort level with the teaching role. Again, the purpose of this stage was to answer the same first three research questions, but also to understand the responses in the context of the personalities and experiences of the respondents. Further, by grouping the responses according to their comfort level with teaching, the contextual information of the entire group could inform the issue from a combined perspective. Because I had not met with or personally talked with any of the individuals as is usually the situation with case studies, I created a persona and termed what I learned about individuals as silhouettes of beliefs and attitudes. This process of creating silhouettes will be described in more detail as part of the methodology below. Finally, as this entire study progressed through the different stages, it became increasingly evident that an analysis of the change in the profession as seen through the silhouette groups lent itself to a comparison with the process known as the diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 1962). In both Stage 2 and 3 of the research, the purpose of this comparison to diffusion of innovation theory was to inform the implications of future research.

Stage 2 Methodology

The methodology for this stage of the research was a further building on the methodology used in the first stage. For example, although the original basic qualitative study was bounded by the two weeks the survey was available through the PUBYAC listserv, by those who volunteered to take the survey, and by those who identified themselves as children's librarians regardless of whether or not they had a master's level library degree, this stage of the research benefitted by being bound by just those 71 that

had master's degrees in library science. This helped me to zero in on those that had an educational investment in librarianship and reflected the profession's recommendation to obtain the degree in its list of competencies (ALSC, 2015). Further, a similar but more rigorous coding and cross-coding allowed more nuances to appear in the analysis of the data than was possible in first stage.

Stage 2 Analysis

Step 1—initial a priori coding of responses. Based on the pilot study, four a priori codes along two dimensions were identified (see Table 1). The two dimensions were (a) comfort with the role of teaching and (b) references to fun. The first dimension contained three codes: (a) comfort with the idea of teaching, (b) discomfort with the idea of teaching, and (c) comfort with the idea of enabling learning but discomfort with the terminology of “teaching” or “educating.” The second dimension represented a single code. Because comfort with teaching was the main framework I wanted to use to categorize groups of children's librarians, I initially used the comfort with teaching codes to code all responses from the 71 participants. Comments that did not clarify the respondent's stance on being comfortable with teaching or did not reference fun were left uncoded at this stage of the analysis.

Table 1

Codes Used in Data Analysis

Dimension	Code	Definition	Examples
First	Uncomfortable with teaching	Comment clearly negative about the teaching role or labels	I was drawn to working with children but was apprehensive about becoming a teacher because of the bureaucratic nightmare, the pressure to get certain results, and the pressure of being such an important person in the lives of a classroom of students. After working as the summer help for a public library, I saw that a career in libraries would give me the chance to connect with children (one of the major appeals of a career in teaching) but without many of the pressures that made me not want to be a teacher.
	Recognizing the value of teaching in job but very uncomfortable with it*	Uncomfortable with being considered teachers, as well as somewhat nervous or fearful of it, but were much milder in their espousing of fun or denouncing of teaching even though they ultimately see themselves as frequently teaching in their jobs	I think I would avoid referring to myself as a "Teacher" simply because librarians don't fit the traditional definition of "teacher" and patrons may operate under the assumption that I can teach their child how to do complex mathematics when the reality is that I depend on my calculator a lot and majored in English in college for a reason.
	Comfortable with making learning happening without using direct teaching language	Comment refers positively about children's librarian having a direct role in children learning, but avoids words like "teach" and "teacher" or "educator"	I love working with kids and their parents. Storytimes give me a chance to build relationships and share literacy tips with parents as well as interact with the kids themselves. Other programming (book clubs, craft sessions, toddler activities, Lego club, etc.) allow me to explore new ideas with kids more directly and again, it is about building relationships and giving the kids a chance to grow and develop and learn.
	Comfortable with teaching	Comment clearly and favorably includes the words "teaching" or being a "teacher" or "educator"	During storytimes, I present early literacy tips and model how to present books and songs in ways that best build pre-reading skills. I'm also teaching the kids new concepts, vocab words, songs, movements, etc.

Table 1 (continued)

Dimension	Code	Definition	Examples
Second	Fun**	References to the library or reading being fun or enjoyable, loving reading, emphasizing play, finding joy in reading, or the importance of being able to freely choose reading and activities according to personal interests.	I am NOT a teacher, and the library is NOT school--the library is a place of learning but is also fun, children should be allowed to read what they want here.
	No category assigned	Nothing in comment directly mentions teaching or learning	I've always thought children's literature is excellent and underappreciated, and I enjoy working with people in a public setting

*Not an a priori code but emerged in the analysis.

**Responses could be coded with two colors if they reflected both a level of comfort with teaching and emphasis on fun.

Step 2—creation of initial categories for respondents. Once all color-coding had been completed, I tallied the number of times each color occurred for each respondent. I then grouped respondents with similar code patterns. I initially created three groups reflecting the three comfort with teaching codes. For example, those who primarily expressed discomfort with teaching were placed in a discomfort with teaching category.

Step 3—refinement and validation of coding and segment group creation.

After sorting respondents into the three categories, I double-checked for clear consensus on the chosen teaching dimension within all comments of each respondent. If a respondent's answers were frequently focused on the tremendous amount of learning that occurred in children who visited the library, but they never referred to their own role in that learning, I made choices based on their wording and active or passive voices as to whether they were comfortable or not comfortable with teaching. I also gave extra scrutiny to comments to see if there were other indicators such as whether the concern was with the label "teacher," rather than the concept of "teaching." In rare instances, I found my initial color-coding of a respondent's comments were inaccurate when

considered in the context of all of the respondent's answers and so adjusted the color-coding to reflect the updated assessment and moved that respondent to the proper group.

While analyzing the discomfort with teaching category, a fourth segment emerged (see Table 1). It was very similar to the dislike teaching category, but certain respondents could see the value of being considered teachers, although still expressing a dominant nervousness or fear about it. Although the people in the dislike teaching group were openly angry, frustrated, passionate, or defiant, the people in this segment were decidedly milder in expressing their feelings about it, but still basically opposed. As is possible with case study analysis (Creswell, 2013), I named and defined this emerging category and grouped the appropriate respondents under it.

Step 4—identifying and applying the a priori code of fun throughout. The second a priori dimension identified in the pilot study was that of fun. This included references to the library or reading being fun or enjoyable, loving reading, emphasizing play, finding joy in reading, or the importance of being able to freely choose reading and activities according to personal interests. All respondents' responses were then combed for these references and color-coded as indicating an emphasis on fun in library experiences.

Step 5—create a silhouette from each teaching category. Once I felt the respondents were reliably grouped according to each of the teaching categories, I began a separate coding process of copying and pasting all comments from each group into separate Word files. These were then combed for comments that were significant in the content, stance, or phrasing and each comment bolded. The bolded comments were then copied and pasted into a new space to allow shaping them into a story. As this process

continued, more and more pieces of information about that group were taken from the Excel file and added to the story as needed. This Word document then became the source for my understanding the overall contextual implications of the group. I evaluated answers and comments in each section, tallying where appropriate, and ultimately deciding on the most germane comments or most representative answer. Usually this occurred by imagining a person sitting before me who would say those things, have those work experiences, and have those self-perceptions. These essential, representative elements were then shaped into sentences and an overall story. Basically, every part of the silhouettes described below was taken from the data of the group and created in this way.

Stage 2 Findings

Between March 30 and April 11, 2015, 71 children's librarians with graduate library degrees responded to a request on the PUBYAC listserv to take an online survey regarding whether or not children's librarians are literacy educators. First, the survey data were summarized to give an overview of the entire group characteristics. Looking at educational background, work experiences, and job responsibilities, the limited demographics of the entire group of respondents painted a typical picture of children's librarians who are generally very positive about their jobs and clear that it should involve a lot of fun. Ages of the 71 respondents were bimodally distributed, with 20% (14) in the 20s, 24% (17) in the 30s, 20% (14) in the 40s, 24% (17), and 13% (9) in the 60s. The number of years working in libraries was substantial, ranging from 1 year to 43 including high school years, paraprofessional jobs, and school or academic library positions. The mean of 15.73 years and the median of 13 years reflect a group of professionals who had

invested considerable time working in libraries. All reported having graduate library degrees with an additional three reporting graduate degrees in other fields, including one additional Ph.D. completed and one Ph.D. in process. Twenty-three, or 32%, also listed education degrees or teacher certification. Elsewhere, in a question about past work experiences, 45%, or 32 out of 71, reported some type of prior teaching work experiences that may or may not have required a teaching degree, such as preschool teaching. This signifies almost half of the respondents had some type of experience with teaching prior to working in a public library. For the top favorite job descriptors children's librarians would be comfortable with, respondents chose those illustrated in Table 2. Although they were not given "librarian" as a descriptor choice, 10 respondents (14%) still mentioned that that would be their preferred label.

Table 2

Top Favorite Job Descriptors

Job Descriptor	% Comfortable with Descriptor
Informational professional	68
Educator	54
Literacy specialist/expert	51
Guide	37
Instructor	32
Teacher	24

When asked if they felt prepared to teach in their jobs, the responses reflected a clear sense that, yes, children's librarians are generally prepared for their work that

involves teaching (83% total). That number jumps to an impressive 99% when the respondents were asked how well prepared they felt for sharing early literacy information with parents, but drops to 75% when the questions were about sharing with parents the basics of literacy instruction for children in grades K-2nd grade or helping a struggling reader.

This overall data summary gives a picture that shows limited agreement within the total sample for a few areas. Each of the 71 responses represent individuals with their own story to tell. Allowed to gather together with like-minded colleagues, I suggest they may have aligned themselves behind the four spokespersons listed below, representing four composite silhouettes of attitudes about teaching in their jobs. Each of these silhouettes represents 10-25 children's librarian survey respondents. As can be seen in the narratives for each silhouette below, each reflects consensus on some critical issues, prominent features from backgrounds, single comments that sum up the groups' overall comments most succinctly, and shared perspectives on the current state of children's librarianship as it relates to being literacy educators. Each of them mentioned fun throughout their responses, although it is interesting to note the group most against a teaching role had the highest percentage of respondents mentioning fun (93%), while the two groups somewhat in support and clearly in support of a teaching role were 77% and 76%, respectively, likely to mention fun. The silhouette narratives given below exhibit the detailed findings for each group by showing their comments within the contexts of the life experiences and philosophies of learning that allow us to better understand their positions. Trustworthiness of the coding forming these silhouettes was affirmed as each group displayed internal similarities such as years of library work, choice of words

substituted for teaching, indications of feeling passionate about the issue such as all capitals or exclamation points, expressions of fear, or emphasis on fun and related terms.

Ultimately, four categories resulted and became composite silhouettes each with a name. The silhouettes are named and defined as follows:

1. Antoinette—These 14 respondents were decidedly uncomfortable with the idea of being considered teachers, insistent on the role of fun in library experiences, and not reticent in expressing their feelings about all of it.

2. Newton—These 10 respondents were similarly uncomfortable with being considered teachers, as well as somewhat nervous or fearful of it, but were much milder in their espousing of fun or denouncing of teaching even though they ultimately see themselves as frequently teaching in their jobs. They were, on average, much younger and had fewer years' experience in library work.

3. Semantha—These 22 respondents were quite comfortable being known as the agent for learning among children and parents, but they rarely used the word “teacher” and, instead, phrased their work using terms like “imparting knowledge,” “encouraging learning,” “sharing tips,” and “presenting information,” thus shaping the learning experience in their own terms.

4. Teagan—These 25 respondents who were quite comfortable and confident in being called a teacher or using the word “teach” to describe their roles frequently had a degree or past work experience in teaching.

Stage 2 Interpretations of the Data

In the same way that a silhouette provides an outline against a lighter background, each of these composite case studies outlines the beliefs, attitudes, and foundational

experiences within one of four cliques in the 71 survey respondents. The more brightly lit background is the field of children's librarianship as expressed by the entirety of survey responses. The data within the dark content of each of the silhouettes were shaped, paraphrased, and selectively included as a narrative, as if I were there looking over their shoulder as they took the survey or following them as they went about their day. This allowed me to use the more richly evocative methodology of describing a case study while staying true to the data from each group of respondents.

An estimated 95% of each of the silhouette narratives were either quoted directly from the data by choosing those comments that succinctly summarized the group's overall feelings, or tightly tied to the data through a paraphrasing and summarizing of all the comments. The remaining 5% that established the setting, was filled in from my personal experience of over 35 years knowing the day-to-day happenings in children's departments of several different public libraries. An example of this 5% would be the instance where a group of like-minded librarians go out for drinks on a Friday, or that a librarian must create a flyer while on the desk on a busy Sunday. The goal in creating silhouettes was to succinctly and colorfully capture what the others in that composite group seem to be thinking. For example, "a helper sort of person with a knack for educating, but without a desire to teach in a classroom" is a quote used by one respondent in the Samantha silhouette and is used in the narrative because it describes the position of a majority of the 22 respondents. When I say about Teagan that she had a B.S. in Elementary Education, this statement is based on majorities or pluralities found in the tallies of background experiences for that group. Thus, I felt confident that I was only reporting out the trends that had the most consensus and were helpful in understanding

the motivations of the entire group. To summarize, if each word or phrase in a silhouette narrative were to be bolded to indicate that it was based on data, an estimated 95% of the words would be bolded. The remaining words would either be inconsequential, or an event or setting description taken from my personal understandings of the work lives of children's librarians.

In my experience, children's librarians as a group are remarkably and passionately in agreement about many of the same things such as children's right to choice in reading materials. However, this is not to deny that they also have distinctly different views about the profession that can be affected by things such as number of years in the field or past work experiences. By grouping them according to common attitudes about teaching, I was able to portray those stances in the context of the respondents' overall experiences—as if we had talked together as they put away their materials after storytime at their library. Meet children's librarians Antoinette, Newton, Semantha, and Teagan.

Antoinette—a silhouette of 14 respondents. Antoinette sits at her desk in the staff work area. It is 5:20 on a Wednesday, and all children's staff, except for those working the evening, have left for the day. Antoinette decided to stay and fill out the online survey she heard about on PUBYAC before she heads home. She has strong feelings about the topic of children's librarians as educators, and she welcomes the opportunity to share them.

Antoinette came to children's librarianship after getting a bachelor's degree in English and Communications. She loves her career and has already spent almost 20 years working in public libraries, even though she is only in her late 50s. She's thinking about applying for a position as a manager of the department but isn't sure with some of the

changes in the field she is starting to hear about that she wants to go that route. Besides, what she enjoys about her job is showing children how much fun books and the library can be, and she's beginning to wonder if that is threatening to change. About the only things in her job that get to her are things like dealing with parents when they are chatting loudly at the back of the room in the middle of storytime, or the stress of preparing programs that don't cost too much and yet will attract enough (but not too many!) kids to make her efforts worthwhile.

Taking the survey is going smoothly, and Antoinette is clear in her answers that she is wary about being considered a teacher. In a few situations, she can see where she could be considered teaching, but, really, it is only about imparting knowledge or indirectly encouraging learning and the absorbing of information in things like learning the Dewey Decimal System. "We do not call ourselves teachers. We are librarians. Intermingling the terms confuses our customers. We're librarians," she types in the comments section. When a following question again asks her to consider her role as an educator, she expresses herself more emphatically, saying, "I am in an informational field, and I help kids learn, but I do not educate them myself. I give them the tools to be self-educators." To explain herself, she mentions how her role is to make sure the library is a place of fun and enjoyment for kids. To herself, she grumbles, "When Library School starts teaching reading methods courses, then maybe librarians will be qualified to call themselves Literacy Specialists. Until then forget it."

When the survey questions come at the teaching question from yet another angle, Antoinette gets testy and starts wondering if she should have taken the survey. The CAPS button gets pressed. "I am NOT a teacher, and the library is not a school," she starts off.

For me being defined as a teacher is making me rethink my career at this point, and I will most likely be leaving youth services and a long career behind in the next year. I don't want to be or have anyone tell me that I must teach and follow those prescriptive rules.

When the survey asks her to explain her comments, she patiently explains,

Being defined as a teacher would add a whole new set of responsibilities to my job. We would never be able to do anything just for fun; there would always have to be a lesson attached to everything that we did. Potentially, the same checks and balances, bureaucracy, etc. that made me NOT want to go into teaching could be put into place. That idea fills me with dread.

Finally, the survey asks Antoinette what types of professional development would help her with the teaching or imparting of literacy information to parents and children. She's a bit reluctant to answer the question, but ultimately answers she could benefit from knowing more about topics such as book leveling systems—as long as it is understood that is not at the same level as a teacher or reading specialist is expected to know.

Next, there is a question on the survey asking her how she would help a parent of a second-grade boy struggling with reading. Luckily, the comment box allows her plenty of space as she freely types in multiple, well-formulated and librarian-tested ideas starting with suggesting the parent check with the teacher or school for their assessment of the problem and moving on to how important it is for the parent to match the child's interests and make reading fun. She even remembers some research she recently heard and includes pointers based on that research.

The CAPS button comes back on for the next question. It's asking what she thinks of a library where infant storytimes are being advertised as educational "classes," of all things! "I would NOT like this," she types. Exclamation points are also her friend for this answer.

Are they nuts!!!! Infants and toddlers are not developmentally ready for this type of teaching. Does the librarian have a teaching certificate with a concentration in early literacy skills? Why can't people mind their own business and do what they do best, and it is not teaching reading.

For good measure, she adds, "Storytime is supposed to be fun."

For the final question, the survey asks what the best possible future would look like for children's librarianship and schools. Antoinette's answer is clear. She types in that she thinks we should let the schools do what they do best, and "we will do what we do best." Although, it would be great, she adds, if the schools would recognize the importance of our role more. But, she basically is clear that we should keep things the same and make sure libraries are fun places for kids where they "will never be tested or judged" and where parents won't have to face yet another source of "mommy guilt" for not raising their child better. As she finishes up the question, she types, "As you can tell I feel very strongly about this."

Newton—a silhouette of 10 respondents. Newton had been out of library school four years when he came across the PUBYAC online survey invitation. His position as one of two children's librarians in one of the branches of a relatively large system was something he enjoyed tremendously and took very seriously. Filling out the survey sounded like a way for him to contribute to the field. Besides, this was Friday, and it had

become a pattern for the librarians at his branch and the next one over to go across the library parking lot to a neighborhood joint for drinks at the end of the week. It might be a conversation starter to take the survey with his work friends contributing their answers as well. They frequently talked business at these Friday Afternoon Club times, and he'd enjoy finding out what how those who had been children's librarians for a while, and for whom he had tremendous respect, would answer some of the questions.

Their usual corner booth was already almost full, so Newton slipped in on the edge, ordered his beer, and pulled out his smart phone to begin taking the survey. One of the reasons Newton loved these Friday get-togethers was that they all shared so many values about library work. Many had backgrounds in teaching, loved working with kids, and loved the children's books they worked with. More than once, they had shared stories about how magical the job was.

"Hey, guys!" yelled, Newton, "Help me out here with this survey. What's your favorite part of your job?"

"Storytimes are my absolute favorite things to do," said the children's librarian from the nearby branch, raising her hand as she volunteered her comment.

"I like sharing my personal excitement about libraries and helping kids realize it is a very special place they can have access to their entire lives," said her friend quietly. She was another children's librarian who was visiting from out of town. Newton nodded in agreement with the intensity of her feelings and her careful use of words, rather than just making it about fun at the library. Then his co-worker shouted out his answer.

“I’ve got you all beat,” he said. “What could be more satisfying than having the kids say, ‘Read it again!’ and ‘Can we do the fish song today?’” whereupon the whole group broke out into a rousing rendition of the silly children’s song.

Newton decided not to ask the survey’s next question of the group because it was a downer. *What’s your least favorite part of your work?* But, by that time, his friend from library school was looking over his shoulder at the small screen and read the question. “I still get sensitive if I feel my presentation of storytime, for example, wasn’t the best and didn’t connect like I wanted to,” she admitted. Newton understood where she was coming from. He was still new enough that he had some of those worries too. His answer, though, would be about those parents who are not kind or attentive to their kids. It made him cringe every time it happened. For good measure, he entered both answers on the survey.

The survey began to ask questions about “teaching” in children’s library work, a topic that Newton and his friends all found unsettling. When the survey asked which job titles (other than librarian) would be most comfortable for the survey respondent, Newton decided this would be a good one to ask his friends.

“Okay, everybody! You have to vote for the ones you like. You can vote as many times as you want. Here goes: ‘*Which of the following descriptors describe your job? Teacher? Educator? Instructor? Information professional? Literacy specialist or expert? Trainer? Coach? Or guide?*’”

Newton was surprised! Almost no one voted for “teacher” or “educator” and almost everyone voted for “guide.” His supervisor sitting across from him jumped in with her comments, “I prefer ‘guide’ because I think it more accurately describes how I see my role—not to tell people what I think or how I see things, but to direct them toward

their own discoveries.” She had worked in libraries for almost 20 years, and he valued her opinion. Several heads nodded in agreement. “Teacher” was neither a title they had asked for, nor was it one that would improve their image.

Actually, Newton had to agree. “Yeah. My word is never final. I can suggest materials, but the patron always has the final say.”

“Besides,” chimed in the friend from library school with a smirk, “it’s kind of romantic—guide.”

And the group erupted in laughs and jeers once again until the visiting children’s librarian raised her glass and piped up, “I hold a master’s degree in library science. I am a *Librarian*. It encompasses lots of duties and responsibilities, but at the end of the day, I am still a Librarian!”

“Hear-hear!!” shouted the group and raised their glasses in toasts.

Yet, from past conversations in staff meetings, Newton knew another side to this rejection of the “teaching” role. His colleagues intermittently talked about “instructing” and “teaching” in their programs and, at the very least, “creating a safe environment for learning.” Still, it was more frequent that in the break room later the conversations were about the relief that none of them had the burdens that classroom teachers had: being pigeon-holed into teaching in just one way, the library becoming as uninviting to children as the school, being expected to tutor kids in reading skills, even the impression that teachers get less respect than librarians—and that is hard to do! No . . . no thank you . . . no. They agreed on that.

The survey had just a few more questions to go, but it was getting late so Newton answered them without consulting the group. He enjoyed answering a question about

how to help a struggling reader and was pretty certain his friends would have agreed: help him find books that emphasize his personal interests and be sure to check in with the teacher at school. Professional development suggestions? Well, he personally wished he had a better grasp of the educational lingo used in the schools so he could help parents with their questions.

The final question asked about the best possible future for libraries and schools. Newton sighed. He'd had way too many requests the past week for biographies of Thomas Jefferson in order for students to enter a Daughters of the American Republic essay contest. If only teachers had alerted him beforehand, he could have made sure to reserve enough material so all of the kids could have found something that helped. Yes, more collaboration between libraries and schools would be great, both now and in the future. He hit the submit button, paid his tab, and wished his friends a great weekend.

Semantha—a silhouette of 22 respondents. It was an April Sunday on Semantha's weekend to work, and even though she missed being home with her family, she actually enjoyed working school-year weekends—they were busy, time flew by, and there was a lot of variety in the people and questions she dealt with. She pinned her nametag on and set about opening the library.

Semantha loved being a children's librarian. Absolutely loved it. If you asked her why, she might tell you it was the "aha" moment when you get the right thing to a kid at the right moment. Other times, she would go on and on about a fantastic children's book. If you were naïve enough to ask her how she was doing after storytime, you'd better get ready for a litany of reasons:

I love watching children get caught up in a story/I enjoy hearing later on that a family sings a song, reads a book, or does a fingerplay at home that they learned during storytime/It is fun watching the lights go on!/I like sharing the pleasure of language/those kids are hilarious/I'm fascinated with how children learn/it's such a rush.

And, more.

Back in college, Semantha got her degree in elementary education, worked a few years as a preschool teacher, then realized it was not the right fit. In her words, she was “a helper sort of person with a knack for educating, but without a desire to teach in a classroom.” So, she went to library school and now, in her mid-40s, she looked back on 15 glorious years as a children’s librarian where she was enjoying teaching every day to all ages of children.

She sometimes wonders if she wants to move up into administration, but she is happy where she is. If anything, she sometimes dreams of going back to school and learning more about how children learn to read and maybe even getting a doctorate in some related field. Then, other times she is quite content educating herself, looking up about the latest research on the infant brain, or even consulting from training materials she got while teaching preschool.

Of course, not everything is perfect about her job. Like parents who play with their cell phones during storytimes and totally ignore the fun (or mischief!) their children are getting into. Or that she is rarely given enough time (or money!) to adequately prepare for her programs. Like today. She’ll be on the desk the entire time the library is

open, and she's supposed to create a flier for her new program as well as figure out which literacy tips for parents she can work into her storytimes for the week? Not too likely.

Her first encounter of the day was a young girl about 9 carefully carrying a glass jar. Inside was the most interesting beetle that Samantha had ever seen with shiny colors and strange horn-like antennae. Samantha joined her on the walk to the 595s, gave assistance in browsing the indexes of identification books, and the girl was on her way to answering her own questions. It was going to be a good afternoon.

One of the things Samantha most appreciated about libraries was the way they helped all ages become lifelong learners. It was not always about school homework, reading stories, and learning because you had to. A lot of kids and parents came because they wanted to learn something on their own for their own purposes—self-educators. As she saw it, that made public libraries “the last true democracy.”

During a lull in the hectic afternoon, Samantha worked quickly to create a flyer for her new storytime program. Her supervisor had wanted to try a new way to promote storytimes: advertise it as a class teaching infants and toddlers literacy with children's librarians as the “teachers.” Samantha's feelings about this idea were mixed. On the one hand, she wholeheartedly endorsed the Every Child Ready to Read approach and enjoyed the opportunities she had to inform parents about early literacy research or model dialogic reading with their children. On the other hand, she firmly believed storytimes should be about fun and playing and the joy of language. The educational benefits of storytime should *not* take center stage.

Then there was the whole thing about being called a teacher. Some of the parents already did. It seemed to Samantha that any time you are in a position of knowledge and

you use that knowledge to guide someone who is less familiar with the knowledge into a more independent or competent position, you are teaching. And, she definitely felt prepared to do this. But, actually, being called a “teacher” crossed a line. Call her “educator” if you will. Or, “information specialist,” or “literacy expert.” She was each of those and more (particularly on a busy weekend!). As far as she was concerned, librarians are in the business of trying to make books and reading fun, “which is usually diametrically opposed to what the education system often does,” she said to herself. “Children who are having a tough time in school need their libraries to be something different than school, not an extension of the misery they are experiencing there.” Besides, *nothing* in graduate library school prepared her to teach. She felt she was a great teacher, but that was because of her education degree, her experience teaching preschool, and the Every Child Ready to Read trainings. It was no thanks to her library degree, that’s for sure. Samantha sighed, saved a version of the flyer emphasizing the teaching of literacy and another that was more subtle about the educational benefits. She’d run them by her supervisor the next day.

As she looked up from the computer, she was greeted by a woman pointing to the stacks as her 10-year-old son fidgeted beside her. “Can you help? That librarian over there says that you have books arranged by reading levels, but I can’t find them,” she said. The mother was actually referring to a shelve, the college freshman who started last week. The shelve was wrong. They did not arrange the books by grade level. Samantha thought to herself this was another area where the profession could do better. To the public, librarians are anyone who works in a library. Most are astonished to learn you

need a master's, which is more than is required of teachers. They think the children's librarians get to read all day and play with children.

Semantha's interaction with the boy and his mother put her back in a good mood. The boy did not like reading and struggled mightily with it. Semantha saw her role as reigniting the desire to learn to read and building the motivation to fight through the difficulty because reading is so worth it. And, as the boy walked out the library doors, he had his nose in the book she had helped him find. Unlike early childhood, literacy past the primary grades was something she needed more professional development in. "We are really clueless about what happens after storytime and before Harry Potter," she said to herself, as she returned to her desk. "My expertise stops at age 6! I just wish I could learn more about how children are learning to read throughout school! Maybe if we were considered to be teachers, we could get our administrators to let us attend more relevant trainings."

By the time the last customer had been gently ushered out the doors and the day was over, Semantha was tired, yet energized by her successes. As she unwound at home and shared some of the fun and funny events of the day with her family, she again realized how much she enjoyed her career. The next morning, an email inviting her to take a survey about whether librarians are literacy educators or not arrived in her inbox. Her Sunday at work would inform her responses.

Teagan—a silhouette of 25 respondents.

What is the official title of your current job? Youth Services Coordinator.

Age range? 31-40.

Educational background? B.S. in Elementary Education, Master in Library

Science.

Other kinds of work you have done besides public library work? Taught preschool 1 year, school librarian 3 years.

How long have you worked in libraries? 13 yea—

When her office phone rang, Teagan turned from the online survey she was filling out to answer it. “Yeah, I’m coming. Thanks for calling.” Teagan was overdue for an interview to hire a children’s librarian for the new branch. The idea that she was shaping library services to children in a new part of the city by selecting the best candidate was satisfying to her. She particularly liked coming up with questions that would let the hiring team know how the candidates felt about some parts of the job that many people did not realize were a part of children’s library work. Like, were they comfortable regularly working with parents? What did they see as the differences between being a teacher and a children’s librarian? How prepared do they feel to educate parents about early literacy? What in their backgrounds prepares them for teaching in this job? So many of the candidates came straight out of library school and rarely did ALA accredited Library Science programs offer any kind of instruction in teaching or child development. So, it was always a bit of a revelation to those new graduates that someone expected them to educate kids and parents. “As a matter of fact,” Teagan thought to herself, “most librarians still don’t realize they are teaching in their jobs.” Teagan strongly believed libraries need to employ at least some librarians with backgrounds in education so that this role was easier to accept. Sure, they could train new hires, but that was expensive in time and resources.

After the interview, Teagan went back to her office. Yep, she was right. That candidate had a deer-in-the-headlights reaction to the questions about teaching.

Personally, Teagan felt that 100% of the time in her job she was an educator. That's one of the things she loved about her job. Every aspect of her job involved teaching or instructing someone. Perhaps to attract candidates who were comfortable with teaching, they should rename the position so that both the profession and the public would understand their jobs better up front when they saw the position title on nametags.

Teagan went back to the online survey hoping to finish it before her next appointment.

Ironically, the next few questions were about what job titles fit for her job. Teagan quickly marked quite a few, including *teacher, educator, instructor, informational professional, literacy specialist/expert*, and more! She had to admit she felt more comfortable being called an "educator," rather than "teacher." Realizing that made her stop and consider what made her job different from that of a classroom teacher. Well, she doesn't have to give grades, doesn't diagnose reading abilities, doesn't have to teach things that aren't fun, doesn't have to get into the reading wars, and she doesn't have to tie everything she does to a rigid curriculum. Overall, however, she would have to say if librarians were more clearly considered to be teachers or educators, there would be more advantages than disadvantages.

"There might be more support from the community. Parents might respect us more and be willing to ask us more questions. We'd be more intentional about looking for ways to educate children and parents. We'd know more about how reading is taught in the schools," she thought to herself. "And, hey! We could claim the educator's

discount at the local teaching supply store!” And, it was time for her to head over to a meeting at the city offices. She’d have to finish the survey later.

The meeting was with the heads of the museum and parks and recreation departments to talk about collaboration for summer activities. As they brainstormed activities and connections, it struck Teagan that she was in a group of community educators. They were all professionals in the business of informal learning, helping the citizens of their community to learn everything from information literacy to 21st Century job skills throughout their lifespans. More importantly, talking with her colleagues at the meeting about collaborative activities in the parks and hands-on exhibits at the museum, Teagan was reminded how important it was that the library in its effort to educate should not forget that kids learn by playing and having fun. Play motivates. When play is present, learning comes naturally.

Back in her office, she had but a few questions left on the survey. One asked how she would help a struggling second-grade reader. She enjoyed answering that because it allowed her to insert some key ideas and techniques from past teaching experience and research she had studied. Yet, she emphasized how important it was to allow the child to read what interested him. The next question about advertising infant storytimes as classes that teach the foundations for reading gave her pause. It made her realize again, yes, they were educators and there was a lot that was positive about holding a storytime “class,” but it was also important that they keep the emphasis on fun first. When the survey’s final question rolled up on her screen, she was ready for it:

If you were to describe the best possible future of both education and public libraries, how might the role of children’s librarians change in that scenario? Every

school would have its own certified librarian who would collaborate more with children's librarians at the public library. Library schools and professional development opportunities would better prepare children's librarians to teach in their jobs. Libraries would be seen as key sources of lifelong learning for everyone—children, parents, and educators.

Teagan hit the submit button for the survey and grabbed her stuff to head out the door to another meeting. This time she was going to a literacy meeting at the school district, both to learn more about how they teach literacy in the schools and to share with them how children's librarians educate children and parents about early literacy.

Need for further inquiry. The silhouette narratives above provide insights into how contextual influences might have shaped an attitude about teaching. For example, Antoinette did not have much in the way of past teaching experiences, was angry about being forced to abandon the emphasis on fun, and feared losing autonomy in how she shaped her programs. Newton also lacked teaching experience and was nervous about the expectations that would come with a teaching role. He was happier with the gentle role of being a guide. Samantha used to teach and had no problem with idea of teaching in her current job, but she had problems with using teaching-related terms that might alienate children and parents. Teagan also had a teaching background and had a no-nonsense acceptance of her teaching role, seeing it as an inevitable change for the profession even if there was resistance by colleagues or other problems with that change.

A complete understanding of the attitudes and beliefs of each of the silhouettes above is not possible considering it is bounded by the 26 questions and the two-week period of the survey. Nor is it possible to align the data within the grouping for each

silhouette completely so that there are not wisps that extend past the profiles presented here. Nonetheless, getting this glimpse into the lives and personalities of Annette, Newton, Samantha, and Teagan has allowed us to understand better why certain topics in the survey data distinctly divide the group and other topics unite them. For example, each silhouette expressed concerns to varying degrees about how being considered a teacher could bring problems to their jobs. Each silhouette had their favorite descriptors for their jobs and it was not “teacher.” All wished for more education and professional development to assist them in their jobs. All expressed comfort in sharing early literacy education with parents, but each group understood that role in different ways. Finally, all silhouettes to varying degrees expressed their commitment to keeping pleasure in library and reading experiences for children.

Throughout the data, there were concerns about how these issues would play out in the future. Would it be saddled with the headaches teachers experience? Would parents expect them to teach specific skills their children needed in order to learn to read? Title change or not, the different silhouettes agreed the public did need to better understand how important their jobs are in children becoming lifelong learners. Would a title change help? Would reading experiences in the library become forced or unhappy? Most importantly, even those that embraced teaching worried that the spontaneous learning moments they facilitated for children in their library would be eliminated and they would be prevented from doing anything with children just for fun. Worries about these potential problems were so pervasive they appeared to hamper children’s librarians in most of the silhouettes from totally accepting educator roles. Will the libraries of the future protect these essential values of children’s librarianship? Further research is

needed to explore whether these possible problems could develop into actual problems in a world where children's librarians were decidedly labeled educators.

Stage 3 Research—Multiple Case Study

Stage 3 Purpose

Creswell (2013) saw the value of multiple case studies in the different perspectives it provides for a selected issue. Through Stage 2 of this research, the selected issue of how children's librarians perceive their roles as educators was found to be negatively affected by lack of experience in teaching, no preparation to teach, the threat of stressors classroom teachers face, and the jeopardizing of fun in the reading and library experience. My purpose for Stage 3 of the research was to take these themes I discovered in Stage 2 of the research and discover how they would be exhibited in children's librarian jobs that were openly educational, jobs that could be seen as leading the profession forward to accepting being educators. This specifically addressed the final research question examining how the identified issues might influence the future of the profession. Thus, five children's librarians who have job titles or descriptions that proclaim their roles as educators were selected and interviewed to obtain the data for a multiple case study. Further details on the Stage 3 methodology will be provided below.

Stage 3 Methodology

Were the concerns expressed by the silhouettes and 71 survey respondents about becoming educators legitimate? To explore that possibility, I obtained expanded IRB approval and searched online, through the PUBYAC listserv (see Appendix C), at conferences and through word of mouth to find four children's librarians that had an education-related title and were willing to be interviewed. Words such as "learning,"

“curriculum,” and “instructor” were tied to these four job titles and job descriptions.

Pseudonyms given to these four interviewees are Irene, Nancy, Alice, and Essie.

However, this assignment of pseudonyms is not meant to imply that the interviewees had one gender or another in reality. Their positions were each created in the last 5-12 years, are not common in the library world, and thus could be considered more on the cutting edge, leading the profession into the future. How did these future-facing children’s librarians in the realities of their jobs view the apprehensions survey respondents identified? Separately describing their experiences through a multiple case study could help to understand the issues that emerged in previous stages of the research.

Last of all, I asked Hannah, the children’s librarian who was named winner of the “Teacher of the Year Award” if she would participate. Although her job title did not have a specific education-related term attached to it, her job description definitely did. Moreover, her teaching degrees and professional background did not include a master’s degree in library studies or previous work in a library; it was, instead, a different advanced educational degree, and she had previously worked as a teacher. Hannah now worked in a public library in a position that others—including those who gave her the award at the national literacy conference—would automatically be considered that of a “children’s librarian.” Indeed, in today’s libraries, positions labeled “children’s librarian” may or may not mean that a graduate library degree was required. It occurred to me that the very path Hannah traveled to be in that position and be named “Teacher of the Year” might both contrast and align with the paths of the four other education-related children’s librarians and reveal a critical contrasting angle on the issues of children’s librarians as literacy educators.

The five interviewees—Hannah, Irene, Nancy, Alice, and Essie—took the same survey that the 71 respondents had. This was followed by my interviewing them each by phone for approximately 45 minutes using a semi-structured interview style and 27 questions (see Appendix D). Because the interviews occurred over the phone, which eliminated some of the usual physical features of a case study approach, I asked each person early in the interview to describe their surroundings. Those comments assisted in establishing a mood and personality for each of the interviewees. I took notes during the interview and recorded and transcribed the interviews.

Stage 3 Data Analysis

The five interviews were coded and analyzed for recurring themes and patterns. The five additional survey responses were likewise coded and analyzed using the same categories as had been used with the previous 71 survey respondents. According to Creswell (2013, p. 101), in analyzing a multiple case study, a typical approach is to present first a description of each case, then present a thematic analysis across cases. The following descriptions will introduce the interviewees and place them within the context of their personal journeys with issues more specific to them also discussed. I then followed with a discussion of additional themes that are present across most of the cases. These themes related back to the issues expressed by both the 71 survey respondents and the silhouettes and gave a perspective of how children's librarians who fear the negative trappings of teaching might learn about the reality of teaching from these leaders in the profession.

Stage 3 General Findings

Overall, it is to be expected that a purposive sampling resulting in the five interviewees below would be reflected in their survey responses, and it was. There were many indications that they each felt comfortable in their skins of being educators. As the following descriptions of the interviews will show, they also understand this key issue from several sides of the children's librarians' world—that of the children's librarian, that of the supervisor or trainer of children's librarians, and that of community educators collaborating with children's librarians.

Asking the five interviewees to take the same survey that the 71 respondents discussed above took served as a bridge in topics and terminology between the two data sets as well as a confirmation and extension of the information found in the interviews themselves. This led to the finding that the interviewees' survey responses were more supportive of teaching roles than even the Teagan silhouette. This was not surprising since the interviewees had been selected for their education-related jobs, but it did serve to validate that the survey may have succeeded in measuring comfort levels with teaching. Four out of five interviewees revealed they have teaching degrees, and four out of five had taught before. Two felt that children's services in a public library offered a combination of what interested them most, including teaching, reading, and working with children. All were comfortable with being called an educator, but only two were also comfortable with being called a teacher or an information specialist which, again, follows the pattern of the Teagan silhouette. As for feeling like they were prepared to teach, the responses were even more strongly marked as being prepared to teach than in the Teagan group. More than the other groups, the interviewees were clear that graduate school did

not prepare them to teach, and that it was important that they do so. Finally, when the interviewees talked about the future worlds of schools and libraries, they supported more collaborating, but they went out of their way to put that vision in the context of an overall educational picture that included the entire lifespan, the whole community, and both formal and informal learning. The following interview descriptions display five current situations where children's librarians are educators.

Stage 3 Interview Descriptions

Irene—place at the table and a new language. Irene, a 40-something children's librarian in a mid-sized urban library system, was sitting in her office in the administration department of her library finishing her lunch as she answered my phone call. Organized stacks of papers waiting for her attention sat on her L-shaped desk while boxes of summer program prizes were set on the floor around her. "No, now is fine, I just, you know . . .," and she graciously slid into answering my questions.

A frame for her answers came early in the interview as she shared with me her path to her current job. She had been a teacher, then worked for a while in a children's department at a public library when she made the decision to go to library school. During that time period, she was involved in work experiences at school, public, and academic libraries. "So, I was experiencing all three types of the libraries, at the same time," she explained. When deciding whether to take her first job as a children's librarian, she found the decision straightforward. In her words, "It clicked. . . . This does make sense. This is why I chose libraries over teaching because I love teaching, and I love libraries, and it's doing both." Things further came together when her library system's director pioneered a shift to an educational paradigm in the language used for their mission, brand, and job

titles. As a result, the library's primary mission and strategic plan became clearly labeled as educational, more protected library funding came through the education department of the local government, library staff positions were renamed as instructors and heads of curriculum, and all programs including story times were retitled as "classes." At about the same time, the Every Child Ready to Read initiative was being instituted in her library system, complete with the emphasis on staff helping parents understand things like "phonemic awareness." Irene describes that time as "And I was like, oh, well I'm already doing what they say I'm doing, so it makes perfect sense to change my title!"

The modification of language that was part of this major shift to being educational was substantial. Irene spoke of looking to the school curriculum in deciding on some library classes to enhance what the children were learning in school. "Instructing" was how Irene described the library staff members presenting programs, and the children who attended were "students." More than any other of the interviewees, Irene chose the word "teach" to describe both her work and the work of the children's librarians she supervises. The changes her library system went through were both a mindset shift and a language shift. Yet, Irene understood how difficult it was for a few of the staff to become accustomed to the changes.

As any transition is, it takes getting used to. It takes getting people to see the vision, and the reasons, and the purposes. We had some people that were gung-ho, all for it, no problem. And other people—because we also changed many words in our language at that time—story time became class—it was probably tougher for some of the people to change their language and refer to all story times as classes. . . . I'm so used to it now. I don't know what else to call them.

She also talked about helping her staff to understand that there were learning purposes even for the “fun” programs such as coloring, and that having those educational purposes absolutely did not mean fun was prohibited, even though some of her staff evidently were hearing it that way. She was clearly passionate about helping them to understand that, although there was a change in mindset—they were now intentionally being educational—they did not have to eliminate the fun and the flexibility of library programming that they and the children loved.

I try and try and try [to] tell them! They’re not required to do everything [that’s educational] all the time. . . . And I keep reinforcing [they] are already doing all of these [activities with educational purposes]. . . . And, I’ve been there and done that way, way, way back. I get it. In the beginning, when something is new, there’s so much to learn that it feels forced and hard, but it’s not.

Irene also shared with me that they often end up hiring former teachers for children's positions. She said she has found that training someone on library skills is easier than teaching someone how to “teach” or love children. Then, for some other positions where an MLS was required in the past, an MLS is now either preferred, required, or not required, depending on the position.

Understanding the library world that Irene is part of is especially notable for two reasons. Her library system is unique in how decidedly they shifted to being considered part of the educational world. Undoubtedly, a prominent reason for doing so was “to reflect what they are actually doing—educating.” The transforming of the language they used for their operations is equally unique among libraries. Irene also spoke of how the change was reflected in their budget now being in the education section of the county

budget. This served them well when libraries around them were being cut. There were two other interviewees, Nancy and Hannah, that mentioned how having a place at the table of funding, resources, and respect made a difference in both the creation of their jobs and their ability to do them well, but the interview with Irene can be used to illustrate the most pronounced language shift used by a library system.

Alice—“the whole point of the library is to have fun.” Deep within the bowels of the main building of her large urban library system, Alice sat at her cubicle and accepted my phone call. The large room was basically empty on a Tuesday afternoon which she said was “super weird” for what she jokingly referred to as their “absolutely beautiful basement office.” Alice and I knew each other from past associations with library organizations and so, after a few minutes of catching up about kids and common acquaintances, we launched into my set of questions. The youngest of all the interviewees, Alice still looked back on a journey through a teaching degree and several teaching and library jobs. In fact, it was the dislike of working with parents that nudged her out of teaching and into library school and library work where she found the best of both worlds—teaching and children.

While Alice never used the term “place at the table,” she was proud of the way her department had remained part of the library’s strategic initiatives for over seven years and recently became part of the local school district’s city-wide plan to improve third-grade reading scores. Moreover, although she never used the term “mindset,” she did mention the intentional shift when re-titling her department from “early literacy” to “early learning” and how some city funding for kindergarten readiness was shifted over to her preschool programming because it was more in alignment with city objectives.

As with other interviewees, Alice emphasized fun and learning as present in all aspects of the library, saying:

I think all learning can be fun. I can't think of a single program that we have in our system that isn't fun and that kids aren't learning from. . . . Because the more fun kids are having while they're learning, the more they're going to learn. I mean, all the studies prove that if kids have lots of serotonin going through their systems because they're having fun and they're enjoying what they're learning about, they're going to remember more. And that is the most important thing that we have or that we can do for kids is let them have fun. A lot of times in school they don't get to have fun with learning, and we're a place where they can have fun while they're learning . . . that's the whole point of the library is to have fun.”

Also, more than any other interviewee, Alice was most comfortable with the term “train” and “trainer” for the work that she did, choosing it over “teach” or “teacher.”

When I am doing storytime or doing programming specifically for children, I feel I am an educator. When I am doing presentations for staff, teachers and grown-ups, I feel I am a trainer. I think trainer is a powerful title that is revered among adults. Using the term educator or teacher is a mixed bag. Some people really honor and revere teachers, while others do not. In some cases, librarian tends to hold more regard for families.

Indeed, a takeaway from my interview with Alice was that not only did she and her staff feel comfortable with their roles of “teaching,” “educating,” or “training,” but also their reputation for being excellent at it was well-known in the city and in such demand that trainings frequently were full. Indeed, there was no need for Alice to explain

to anyone that she was educating in her job because the reputation that she and her library had for teaching was already well known.

Nancy—fun and learning combined. It was the Frodo bobble head on her desk that gave me a clue that this lady likes fun, not to mention the inflatable musical instruments and unusual figurines strewn about her office. When I called to interview her, Nancy, a children’s librarian in her 50s, easily shared with me her life journey into children’s library work, literacy learning, and her current job at a large urban library system. She felt the job was “the perfect job for me because it's working with people, it's working with children, it's working with books and learning.” Although she did not come from a teaching background in her earlier work and college education as did the other four interviewees, she clearly saw connections between her developmental psychology undergraduate degree and how she teaches in her current position.

The reason I focus so much on fun is that the basis of all learning is relational. I just think that everyone learns—feels more powerful and learns more—when they have a relationship with the person that they're learning from—a positive relationship. In creating an atmosphere of fun, there's a couple of things [to consider]: it makes me much more accessible. So, if I'm silly, I'm not very threatening for very young children, and for toddlers especially. But also, for parents and caregivers who might be uncomfortable with literacy or some of the elite sort of stereotypes about the library.

Fun and learning seem pervasive in everything that Nancy touches. As a matter of fact, the same is true for her library system that has overtly tied their strategic plan to community, learning, and enjoyment.

Like Irene, Nancy had much to tell me about how her library learned the importance over the last 15 years of having a place at the table with the early learning efforts in her state. Although in her situation, it was more the political influence and positioning for grants that came with earning that spot.

A commission on early learning . . . wanted to bring together all the early learning leaders from [the] State, so they could focus on better support for families and for young children. And they did not include any libraries in that task force! No. Nope. Nope! So, our director at the time said that—I mean, we've been doing this for over 100 years—“We should be at that table!” The head of the foundation for early learning, he said, “Well, you know, libraries are hard to work with because they're so individual and you have a whole bunch of different voices.” So, at that point they created a statewide coalition called the _____ Public Library Partnership, because if . . . early learning [was] a sort of political movement happening in the state, libraries wanted to be involved in it!

Nancy goes on to say how successful that partnership has been:

I now sit on a legislature-created task force. . . . Last year, they added a position specifically for a librarian. . . . Over the last 15 years, we've really been sitting at tables! My boss would always say, “We have to be at the table!” . . . It was great advocacy in a way because it really let a lot of the community know a lot of the things that libraries have to offer that most people don't realize. . . . So, over the years we're just so completely immersed in all the early learning efforts of the county, they wouldn't imagine being without librarians!

Also, like Irene, Nancy found that the success of training children's librarians who are resistant in applying literacy learning was related to helping them accept a new mindset:

I fight against that all the time. My librarians are great, but learning *is* fun.

Preschool math is a blast! You just have to find the ways to be intentional about putting it in there. You have to work a little harder, but it's always fun. . . .

So, I hear that a lot. Whenever they talk about Supercharged Storytimes or anything like that, there's always the pushback, "I just want to have fun." Story times are just such little hot beds of learning! . . . I mean nothing in my story times have gotten less fun because I've been more intentional about what I'm bringing to it. In fact, I think they've gotten *more* fun because I'm more appropriate in terms of where the kids are and what they're learning, and I have a wider repertoire to pull from. I think of my puppet shows as being fun, but I know a lot of learning happens at them just because of the language and the stories that we choose and the ways that puppeteers interact with children. . . . It's just changing your mindset.

While a specific language associated with the new emphasis on literacy learning in libraries was not as pronounced in Nancy's library, frequently she did use words associated with "train." Also, there was a recognition that "early learning" was a catchword that a lot of people were buying into in her community.

I think "early learning" has become sort of ubiquitous. At least out here. And with the creation of a department level for the state, people will ask me, "What does that mean exactly, that you're the early learning librarian?" So, then I explain that

I'm sort of the library *space* in the early learning community and that seems to make sense to them.

One area in which Nancy stands out is her fascination with theories and recent research in early learning and how it applies in her work. From excitement over how Every Child Ready to Read tied storytimes to research-based best practices to alliances with neighboring universities studying brain activity in infants, she looks for opportunities to both read the research and be a conduit for it to her children's librarians.

It was so fun [when I went into children's librarianship] to come back to some of the studies and the big pillars of child development—Vygotsky and Piaget and all these people. I was like, “Oh my God, I'm coming home!” Then being able to see Vygotsky—where does he belong in the library? When you're thinking about play? And, does it belong in the library? It's made my job really interesting, having that kind of background and also that interest.

Recently, she held a workshop for staff on the importance of using humor in learning:

There's a lot of research on humor. It's really healthy! Whenever there is emotion attached to learning it stays longer, both positively and negatively. So, if there's a huge bad emotion, that gets kind of sealed, which is why we have such problems with Adverse Childhood Experiences. So, I think the flipside is true, too. If you're laughing really hard and having a really fun time, you'll remember that. The learning attaches itself to the emotion.

Nancy's enthusiasm for the philosophical and research basis for combining learning with fun, created and nurtured on her own, is an example of how resilient children's librarians have had to be in order to get the training they need.

Essie—“to learn, they need to be engaged and interested and that means fun!” I had originally met Essie at a library function and was intrigued when she told me her title. Her library system, a large urban one, not only created two positions that were overtly connected to learning, but those positions specified two separate approaches to learning: formal and informal. Essie’s job working with the elementary, middle, and teen levels was more about the “formal” part, but, by her own admission, was still “informal” in the way it was focused on fun and based on participation by choice. When I spoke with Essie by phone, she was at her desk surrounded by co-workers in her department at the central library. I got the impression it was but a place to perch awhile before she headed out again to the branches where she did most of her work with children’s staff.

Like three of the other interviewees, Essie had both degrees and job experiences in teaching. Like Alice, there was something she really did not like about teaching that ultimately caused her to leave.

We were training kids to work at Burger King. Because they took out the social studies. They took out science. They took out art. They took out music. So, they took out every reason why a kid would go to school to begin with! Because we know kids go to school, not necessarily to learn how to read or to do math. They go to school because they like PE, and they like art, and they like science. And then, they're just there for the rest of it. I felt the school that I was at had cut every reason why a kid would want to be in school and left, like, all the yucky stuff. I really did feel the curriculum was preparing them to be a fast-food worker! I just didn't agree with it, so I felt like I had to do something different.

Now in her 40s, Essie spoke of her path to this point as being greatly influenced by mentors that changed her ideas about what libraries were all about. Early on, one mentor opened her eyes to the role of libraries in community engagement.

She really mentored me [in] the idea of working with community, like the whole community engagement aspect of librarianship and, really, that work doesn't have to happen in the library. I think she really kind of set me on a different path of librarianship.

Another mentor changed her mindset that literacy is only about reading.

So, if you look at the opportunities gap that students have, reading is one literacy. But, there are several. There are lots of other literacies that students are expected to have to be successful. So, I think what [my mentor] did, she really changed my mindset of what a library should be. She changed “summer of reading” to “summer of learning.” She really listed out specifically the different literacies, and one of them was digital media.

Now Essie is changing mindsets for the librarians she trains. She shares how recent teen programs necessitated many hours of staff training in how to combine learning, fun, and a hook of something that they need to complete for school or college to get them in the door.

You can't really get teens to do anything that's not fun. They just won't come. So, the teen services librarian was like, “Teens come to the library because they have a need that needs to be met. Like a school credit thing you get. Like service-learning. They come to hang out with their friends. And they come to have fun.”

So, [I told her] if you can do all of those three things, you will have teens come to your service-learning programs.

Essie does emphasize the role of fun and learning in library programs, but she uses slightly different language. She reframes it as making library programs engaging, “low-barrier” and providing choices.

So, one of our really popular programs is learning buddies, and that is where kids and teens read books together. That is a direct reading instruction program, but librarians don’t actually do the reading instructions. Teens do. But if you had an adult do that sort of work, the kids would not have as much fun. Fun has to be at the center of everything, right? Because we know that kids learn best when they're having fun and they're engaged. If you don't have any engagement, they're just not going to learn, and they're not going to be there because everything at the library is kind of a low-barrier program where they have to drop in. So, if they're not engaged and they're not having fun, then they won't be there. (laughs) So we have to have fun with everything that we do.

Finally, although other interviewees talked about their success in finding a place at the table of local government to support their work, Essie had a different experience. Her program started off as a homework help program that was “wildly” successful and was reaching greater numbers than the library’s more expensive programs. Thus, the library foundation supported expanding her department and tailoring the efforts to be better aligned with school standards, curriculums, and best practices.

Hannah—“technically, I’m not a librarian.” When Hannah received the national Teacher of the Year award, they introduced her as a children’s librarian at the

Easton Public Library. Indeed, Hannah does work at the public library, she is responsible for presenting the library's storytimes to childcare centers, and her office is in the main library downtown. Hannah's advanced degree is in education, however, not library science, and she worked as a teacher prior to coming to the library. Sometimes her coworkers who have a graduate library degree will refer to her as a children's librarian, and she will say, "Technically, I'm not a librarian." But when she says that, she is corrected "by some of my librarian colleagues and they say, 'No, you are,' which is sweet."

Hannah's official title is "Library Manager II," and her unofficial title is "Program Manager," neither of which include "librarian." "But, if you look me up in the city's HR record, it would say Library Manager II. I guess I'm sort of the opposite of who you're looking at [for your study] because education isn't in my job title, but it's all over my job description."

When they posted for the job she holds, she says there were requirements for background experiences and advanced education in teaching, but there was no mention of the need or desirability of a library degree or library experience. Still, as Hannah explains it,

It was pretty obvious that it was a job for [a traditional] educator and not a librarian. It was explicitly about training teachers and providing curriculum to childcare centers and providing outreach programs to them and then, I think that the education requirement said a minimum of a bachelor's degree in education or related field, master's preferred. So, it was pretty obvious that it was targeted at someone with skills like mine.

When asked if they would have accepted someone with a master's in library science if they did not have an education degree, she answered,

I think that they might have that person have substantial experience in the world of [formal] education. But—and this is pure conjecture on my part—but, I really think that they were less interested in having somebody with a library background and more interested in looking at applicants who had more explicitly education-related background.

Yet, Hannah says that early in her time at that job, “I also was on the floor reading to kids,” and, as she takes storytime and training programs out in the community, she is an avid spokesperson for the library’s mission of providing a “joyful and developmentally appropriate and intentional experience for children.” Like the other four interviewees, Hannah has stories to tell how the mayor asked the library to the table as they dealt with dismal third-grade reading scores and how well the library is partnering with the school district.

She talks about the curriculums that she and her staff with input from preschool caregivers create to take to childcare staff and model for them how to maximize the literacy enhancing qualities of existing classroom curriculum and provide a connection between it and library resources. Moreover, the curriculum they develop, as with all the other interviewees, is in alignment with the state’s standards. Like Alice and Nancy, her work is plainly tied to outreach. Yet, for her programs, she never used the word “teach.” She made the point that her staff intentionally “modeled” to teachers and parents ways to instill literacy in children and that she does not equate that with “teaching,” that more

formal practice found in schools. Moreover, like Nancy and Essie, Hannah's language is congruent with her philosophy of learning.

I personally do not use the word trainer. It implies that information flows one way—from the trainer to the trainee—which is not how I think about the process of education. I see it more as a multi-directional flow of information. It's important for everyone to have the opportunity to co-construct knowledge together.

Perhaps the most interesting framing of her work comes in how she sees it as different from what the traditional children's librarians do at the branches.

[Our programs are] very intentionally part of a sequence of experiences that we've developed for children and teachers. It might not, on the face of it, look all that different from a library story time, but I will also say that our motivation is very different, because we are really looking at it as a teaching experience for the teachers as well as a joyful and developmentally appropriate and intentional experience for children. I think any children's librarian would say the same thing about what they do. And, that they would probably also say that they are modeling for parents or those in attendance at their story time. I think the difference is that before, when we begin to work with a preschool or childcare center, we train the staff and we specifically talk about the techniques that we will then do later in story time.

Hannah goes on to explain that their programs are more formal in their approach to learning because they are based on set curriculums. Also, the teachers and children do not have a choice in attending, and the program is sequential with each session building

on the one before. Reading between the lines, it is as if the two aspects of literacy education occurring at the library—that occurring through Hannah's programs out in the community, and the storytimes and other programs occurring in the children's rooms of the branches—are topics of serious discussion at her library about what kind of educating is happening.

I mean, we've talked about renaming the department I manage so that it's a little more descriptive about what we actually do. But then, we get into the debate.

Children's librarians really do believe that what they're doing is educational, and I would never disagree with that. And, that it's entrenched in early literacy, and I would never disagree with that. I think the distinction is that we are very focused on that modeling piece and because most of the programming that we do, outreach that we do, are preschools and childcare centers and organizations that we've had a long-standing relationship with. So, they're not kind of all-call programs that are open to everybody. We're specifically invited. And it's part of an ongoing relationship.

In her response to the member check, Hannah added clarification on the complexities of the differences between her department and the rest of the library.

I think what is unique about my department—a team of educators embedded within the library—is that in many ways, we operate like an education department in a museum. It's not our job to determine, protect, display, etc. the collections (in our case, books and puppet shows—though the puppet shows are a distinguishing characteristic of our library), but rather, to make them accessible to teachers. Our job descriptions look nothing like a Children's Librarian or Library Associate

description (the library associate position is a library position for someone without a library degree. They also don't do the work of a professional librarian . . . I don't either!). While we talk about story times for children, we are really clear internally that the story times my staff do are modeling best practices for the teachers so that they will incorporate our methods into their daily practice. . . .

The benefit for the children is secondary as far as our goals are concerned.

Hannah sees these discussions as part of an evolving sense of how libraries see themselves within the educational world, with Every Child Ready to Read a major influence in the mindset shift.

She's also clear that the library should be about encouraging enjoyable reading experiences, rather than supporting the idea that kids can only read at their precise level. Overall, Hannah is very well aligned with the other interviewees in seeing the library as making sure people understand that,

Yes, [children] need to learn how to read. But we also need to make sure that that's a positive and pleasurable experience for them. So, you want to make sure that you're mixing it up. That children's only contact with books is not-- especially, if there's a struggling reader with a stressful situation, that those children who are struggling readers are still given opportunities to choose what they want to read, to not have to worry about whether it's a just right book for them. Then, also, empowering teachers to take time to read aloud high-interest, engaging books to their students. That there's merit in that.

It's almost as if Hannah's role is to be the bridge that libraries offer between the more informal role that children's librarians play in teaching early literacy, and how teachers in formal education have been told to teach reading.

Additional themes among interviewees.

Overview. As we have met these five people with education-related job titles at public libraries, we have found multiple commonalities. Those already explored include procuring a place at the table in local governments, finding their library jobs allowed them as former teachers to combine the best of both worlds, straightforwardly applying teaching-related terms for library programs, and working to change staff's mindsets about being educators. Several additional trends surfaced and will be discussed below. For example, pervasive throughout the earlier 71 survey responses were concerns that being labeled a teacher would mean their jobs would start including problems such as discipline, bureaucracy, grades, parent teacher conferences, testing, grading papers, school politics, a more demanding schedule, and being held to accountability measures. Each of the interviewees with education-related job titles were asked if these apprehensions did, indeed, arise as problems in their work. For each concern such as discipline or accountability assessments, no more than one interviewee admitted to experiencing a problem. However, although a couple of the other teacher-related issues weren't seen as problems, they did arise as themes in discussions with the interviewees:

1. How to manage when parents expect children's librarians will teach reading skills.
2. Maintaining fun for children when education becomes a primary focus in library programs.

Finally, four additional trends in the interviews were significant in understanding how the future of children's librarianship might change:

1. How intentional learning at libraries relates to school standards and curriculums.
2. How Every Child Ready to Read helped librarians realize their educator roles.
3. Whether learning at the library is formal or informal.
4. How graduate library schools and professional development opportunities could help.

These themes will be explored in detail below.

Parent expectations that children's librarians will be teaching reading skills.

Parents are frequently eager to find the specialized help their children need in learning to read and are not averse to finding that help through the librarians at their public library. As far as many parents know, the schools and the public libraries are all part of the same educational system, and there is agreement on how reading is taught. The interviewees were clear that they did encounter this situation, and they strove to provide clear and understandable language to avoid confusion as they explained to parents they could not teach phonics or fluency or any of the specific skills seen as part of learning how to read in schools. In particular, if the community had a lot of English language learners, the understanding of how learning occurred in libraries versus in schools was often unclear for people new to the country. Essie found this to be the case and so down-played her education-related title when speaking with parent groups for fear it would add to the confusion of parents learning English and new to the school system.

Despite facing the same problem, each location handled the confusion on who teaches basic reading skills differently. Irene said they made the distinction with parents that at the library, children were learning “skills to help you as you start to learn to read versus saying, we are teaching you to learn to read. . . . Because that, we are not doing.” Alice said that when she trains librarians to work with parents, she tells them, “We are not teaching children how to read. We are getting kids ready to read.” Hannah was the most definite in describing what they were doing in their programs as “No matter what, we are not focused on the mechanics of reading. We’re more focused on how do you provide developmentally appropriate joyful experiences for children in these different stages.” Nancy made the distinction that children’s librarians cannot be not held accountable for teaching children to read, but what she felt personally responsible for was teaching children how to love books and reading. Essie pointed out the differences as a matter of there being pressure in the schools to learn to read, whereas at the library, the pressure was low, there were choices, and it was all focused on fun.

Will fun diminish if education becomes a primary role? As already pointed out in three of the four children’s librarian interviews, the staff that they supervised did bring up the same concern about losing the fun in library experiences that many of the 71 survey respondents voiced. In each of the three cases, the interviewee spoke at length about their strenuous rebuttal of that concern whenever it arose, explaining fun is a necessary and central component to the library experience and may be a matter of their staff needing to change their mindset. The following sample remarks from each of them reveal the intensity of their belief when asked if fun had been diminished in their programs:

Irene: “What’s going to bring customers in? . . . Fun is perceived differently by every individual. . . . You *have* to enjoy it. You *have* to have fun. If you’re not, [the children] know it, and it’s not going to work.”

Essie: “Noooooooo. It has to be fun. Fun has to be at the center of everything.”

Alice: “No, no! We have *so* much fun! That's the whole point of the library is to have fun. . . . I can't think of a single program that we have in our system that isn't fun and that kids are learning from.”

Nancy: “Learning is fun! . . . In fact, I think [story times have] gotten more fun.”

The interviewees sometimes framed the importance of fun within the theory or research behind it. For example, Nancy welcomed the theoretical framework that Vygotsky and Piaget provided about the importance of play. She pointed out that kids only learn when they are relating to someone and having a “positive experience,” and that “whenever there is emotion attached to learning, it stays longer.” She also noted that separating the different domains of learning was not useful for children, saying, “[for] children learning is just all packed in there right together.”

Essie framed the use of fun in learning as part of the more open nature of informal learning and further terming the inclusion of fun as a way to make the learning unpressured and “low-barrier.” Alice brought up the physiological aspects of fun in the learning process, stating,

The more fun kids are having while they're learning, the more they're going to learn. I mean, the studies prove that if kids have lots of serotonin going through their systems because they're having fun and they're enjoying what they're learning about, they're going to remember more. And that is the most important

thing that we have or that we can do for kids is let them have fun. A lot of times in school they don't get to have fun with learning, and we're a place where they can have fun while they're learning.

The closely related concept of choice in learning was also brought up as particularly applicable to public libraries, with Irene noting that children came to the library “by choice or by parent,” Essie noting that despite pressure from the schools to restrict book choices by reading level, the library did not espouse that, and Alice saying she personally wouldn’t choose to bring her kids to storytime if it was too academic and not fun.

Interestingly, Hannah admitted to not being as comfortable using the term “fun” in discussing the programs she was responsible for, instead talking about providing “positive experiences.” When asked if there were any particular reason why she did not use the term “fun,” she responded

Well, I mean, I think it should be fun. I think when I talk about what we do and why we do it—usually with funders—I don’t know why I don’t use the word fun. I just don’t. But I focus on that it’s a positive, joyful experience which I think that that might be a little different than fun. Fun is certainly a component. But I also think there's kind of that warm, fuzzy aspect of what we do which I don't know that I would call that fun. It’s enjoyable.

Even within the survey responses of the 71, there was widespread use of the term “fun.” However, it is likely that this term is not used in discussions about learning in schools, which raises the question if Hannah, a former teacher with an advance education degree but not a library degree, is not as used to the frequent application of the term as

found among children's librarians. Is incorporating "fun" an indication of the children's librarian culture, but less so for those from formal education backgrounds?

Finally, there are four remaining trends throughout the interviews—intentional learning, the influence of Every Child Ready to Read, the library's understanding of their role in informal learning, and whether graduate library schools and professional development opportunities provide support for children's librarians as educators. How these four trends played out for children's librarians who have pioneering education-related jobs are significant in understanding how the future of children's librarianship might change.

Relating library learning to school standards and curriculums. As Irene pointed out, language is powerful in conveying what you are truly doing and hence, she used the words "curriculum" and "instruction" frequently in her interview. She also mentioned that they tailored what they were doing in their programs by checking the curriculum at the schools they were serving and then shaping what the library offered so that it prepared children for school or enhanced student learning. Alice, meanwhile, mentions her programs are tied to a list of standards that are aligned with the state's early learning standards and that they are also part of the birth-to-8 map which is tied to the city's school district. Nancy explained that her programs went through rigorous steps to stay within their area of expertise (i.e., literacy) as they participated in statewide efforts to align continuing education for childcares and preschools more closely with the school district curriculums. Essie talked about lining up her programs with Common Core and 21st Century standards so that they covered what the schools did not cover. Finally, Hannah saw her program as based on a curriculum, although there was no mention of that

curriculum being aligned to the school's curriculum. Tying library programs to formal education standards could be one indication of the direction of the future. Will programs that do not align with formal education standards be eliminated? Or, as Irene point outs sometimes happens with their programs, will there simply be an indication which programs might align with school standards?

Every Child Ready to Read helped children's librarians become educators. It was a bit like being an archeologist as the interview transcriptions were combed for references to what was happening in each location in the years after Every Child Ready to Read was rolled out. It is perhaps a sign that Every Child Ready to Read quickly became a part of the landscape of children's librarianship since interviewee after interviewee referred to it as an era when children's librarians became educators of early literacy in storytimes. Sometimes there was no specific mention of Every Child Ready to Read unless I asked in order to verify that Every Child Ready to Read was truly responsible for the change. For example, Essie, who works primarily with older children, mentioned how there was a trend where storytimes became more about early literacy education, particularly for the parents at that time, and she confirmed it was because of Every Child Ready to Read. Alice talked about how the training for storytimes became more substantial about the time Every Child Ready to Read came out, and that librarians "all know that we're educators." Nancy spoke of the appropriateness of incorporating Every Child Ready to Read in staff training for storytimes as well as embedding Every Child Ready to Read in each of their trainings of early childhood educators. Hannah was the clearest in the effect of Every Child Ready to Read on the field, stating,

I also think that the Every Child Ready to Read curriculum, especially the 2.0 version that came out several years ago, has also been really key in that mind shift or mindset shift for children's librarians. So, I think as an institution, that we might have sort of thought of ourselves as an educational institution. But I think that that has really ramped up over the past, I would say, 5 to 10 years. And I also think that at least here in [Easton], I can't speak anywhere else, but kind of the public perception of the library as an educational institution has also ramped up.

Perhaps the most powerful indication of the effect of Every Child Ready to Read can be found in Irene's career decision to go into children's librarianship and shortly afterwards, easily endorse her director's plan to change staff titles to ones that related to education.

I was just trying to put it all together, and see how is this going to work? And I was like, oh, well I'm already doing what they say I'm doing, so it makes perfect sense to change my title. It was also around the time we started purposefully incorporating and educating with early literacy.

It is important to note that there was no mention of Every Child Ready to Read in the interview questions, and, thus, mention of it by the interviewees manifests a strong enough influence for them to bring it up themselves.

Formal and informal learning at the library. Throughout the surveys and interviews, it was fascinating to see how malleable and variable language can be in different settings. This has proven true with how the five interviewees perceived their roles as formal and informal literacy educators. After all, public libraries have long held the reputation for being sources of informal education. Yet, with the five education-

related jobs held by the interviewees, they each recognized that their educator roles were more formal in certain situations and less so in others. For example, Irene admitted that since her job title includes the word “curriculum,” it sounds as if she is dealing with more formal learning. But she affirmed that the reality is that she deals with both formal and informal learning. Essie’s job title also sounds more formal, and she explained that it is because she does closely align her work with school standards. Yet, so much of what her library teaches doesn’t fall within the school day, and the participant has a choice whether or not they attend, so, in that respect, it is considered more informal. Essie also mentioned her library system emphasizes informal learning in their official mission statements. Alice was pleased to tell me that they see their new “little university” program for ages 0-5 as informal learning because it aligns with what children need to prepare for first grade. She saw it as informal learning, but to the city, it was endorsed as “alternatives to kindergarten.” Hannah sees the learning in her programs as relatively formal, especially in relation to regular storytimes because of the sequential curriculum, the same teachers and children attending all the sequential programs, and the fact that the children don’t really have a choice in whether or not they attend the story programs and puppet shows that are presented in their preschool. Meanwhile, when Hannah compared these outreach programs to the more traditional programs the children’s librarians in the branches were doing, she considered those branch programs to involve more informal learning. Nancy saw classrooms and library learning as overlapping quite a bit, but that library learning is more spontaneous and focused on fun and, therefore, more informal, even though there was still a lot of intentional learning taking place. Generally, all interviewees made a distinction between their targeted focus which was more formal

learning, and the focus of the children's librarians in the branches, which was more informal.

Shortfalls of graduate library school and professional development in preparing educators. Many, if not most, positions for children's librarians require a graduate degree from an American Library Association accredited school. Yet, when asked if their library school education prepared them for their jobs, the answer from all four of the children's librarian interviewees was negative. Hannah's advanced education degree, however, appeared to work well for her job at the public library where she earned the national Teacher of the Year award. But, the four who went to graduate library school in order to become certified children's librarians had some observations and criticisms about their professional education.

Library school worked for Irene. Even though there was not specific training in teaching there, she was able to apply what she was learning because during the period of time she was in library school, she worked full time in an academic library, substituted in a public library, and interned in school media. Ultimately, she felt she learned best by doing and being able to apply what she was learning. Alice felt like she had a total of one course in graduate library school—children's literature—that specifically helped prepare her for her job, despite being on the track to become a school media specialist. "They didn't even have a class that taught you how to do story time," she added. Additionally, Alice said she could tell when a children's librarian did not have any teaching background because she was less comfortable with teaching. You could almost hear Nancy shaking her head as she said,

I'm kind of astounded. When I went to library school, you could become a children's librarian . . . not knowing anything about children! That was kind of shocking to me. I really think that in order to really understand children services, you have to have an idea of what's developmentally appropriate.

Essie, however, was the interviewee who was the most passionate about the shortcomings of graduate library schools.

That job that they trained us to do no longer exists. . . . I think it just generally didn't prepare me to be a youth services librarian. I wish there had been some behavior management courses, some reading courses—how do kids learn how to read would have been really fantastic! How do you educate parents? You know, how do you work with parents? How do you work with community? So, I feel like all of the key things that I was responsible for as a children's or as a youth services librarian, my library degree really didn't focus on it at all.

So, they need to think about what do they want librarians to be in the future and really adjust the librarian program for that job. I would add a race and equity class. Cultural humility. I'd also, if we're focusing on youth services, definitely add how to work with community. How to partner with community. How do people learn. Like a learning class. Definitely, like a behavior management class. So, it would definitely be a combination between a teaching degree and a library in a traditional librarian degree. I think there's a lot that can be done. . . . I think that as we begin to look more at diversifying our workforce, we are going to have to take a hard look at the MLIS.

Professional development opportunities within the library systems of the interviewees fared only slightly better in the estimation of the children's librarian interviewees. Nancy talked about reading research on her own to keep current. Alice summed it up best for most of the group, saying

I've had to go outside of the library world at this point for professional development for myself. Most of what is being offered in the library world is stuff that I already know, or I've already done, and I already am presenting on. I now go to like NAEYC [National Association for the Education of Young Children] and Zero to Three and other sources like that to get my education. And I also do a lot of webinars that deal with different topics. My favorite is the Early Childhood Investigations group [for early childhood educators]. But yeah, most library presentations are just not doing it for me anymore.

One of the more interesting findings in the responses from the silhouettes of Samantha and Teagan was how children's librarians who were in favor of a teaching role and had teaching backgrounds still clearly faulted graduate library schools for not adequately preparing children's librarians to teach. All silhouettes, regardless of their comfort level with teaching, talked to some degree about going beyond their jobs to educate themselves about the research and theory behind early literacy. Similar and numerous complaints from the interviewees point to the critical need for the profession to change how it prepares and supports its members if it intends to remain a vital force in the changing world of education.

Trustworthiness and Triangulation

To establish trustworthiness of the findings for this case study (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009), several measures were employed. First, each of the interviewees were asked to member check the findings, and all five responded. Their requested changes were then incorporated into the case study. Next, keyword searches using Academic Search Premier from 2005-2015, the 10 years preceding the survey, were conducted on *Children and Libraries*, the primary journal of the profession. This revealed no articles that directly referred to the children's librarians as "teacher/s," "educator/s," or as involved in "teaching" even though museum staff or childcare providers collaborating with librarians in presenting literacy programs were called teachers. During the same period of time, other general professional library journals offered only a handful of articles on topics such as how children's librarians could use specific teaching strategies in answering reference questions (Pattee, 2008), or how librarians could be seen as formally teaching information skills or training staff (Fulton, 2009; Neuman, 1999). In an article unusual in a professional library journal for its literacy theory basis, Ross (2009) listed all the different models of how children learn to read and suggested that children's librarians should understand which one they are trying to support in their library work. Her suggestion was that they portray themselves as allies of reading, offering wide choices to children. She did not give children's librarians credit as being teachers or educators of literacy, but instead quoted Don Holdaway (1979), saying that reading is "short on teaching and long on learning" (as cited in Ross, 2009, p. 644). If the authors of all articles during this 10-year period were reflecting the sentiments of themselves and

their work colleagues, it is another indication of the reluctance of children's librarians to be named as teachers during this time period.

As an artifact to this case study, the Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC) reflects this shift in the evolutions of its list of children's librarian competencies. First published in 1989, the competencies presented multiple roles that children's librarians were to consider as part of their jobs. Yet, derivatives of the words "educate," "teach," or even "literacy" were not a part of their responsibilities in the 1989, 1999, or even 2009 versions of the list (ALSC, 1989, 1999, 2009, 2015). Although they were urged to keep abreast of educational trends and "instruct" children in the use of the library, there was no mention of their role as educators or teachers in literacy. However, in 2015, after Every Child Ready to Read had solid footing in libraries and after the completion of the survey, the wording in the list of competencies changed. The number of occurrences of the same word derivatives were now as follows: "teach" (0); "literacy" (1); "instruct" (1); "educate" (6); and "educators" as used to refer to teachers in schools (5). It is interesting to note that there is still no reference to children's librarians as having the roles of teacher or educator.

Additionally, in the evaluations of the two editions of the Every Child Ready to Read program (Neuman & Celano, 2010; Neuman et al., 2017), the authors addressed the self-perception of children's librarians as teachers. The earlier report mentions the goal of the program as a parent education initiative, leaves out all direct mention of children's librarians as teachers or educators, mentions the program's value as solidifying the library's partner role in education, and refers to the reluctance of children's librarians to be considered educators. Seven years later, the second report clearly labels children's

librarians as teachers and educators, more directly confronts the remaining resistance to the educator role and indicates the role is changing. They cite several children's librarians talking about how their earlier reluctance to be seen as teachers was caused by lack of preparation in graduate library schools and how directors and administrators are responding by overtly directing staff to adopt the new educational roles and by hiring staff who either have an MLS in library science *and* early childhood education, or who do not have a graduate library degree, but do have a teaching background.

Finally, at a 2017 national conference session on how public libraries prepare children for kindergarten (National Center for Families Learning, 2017), three of the children's librarians on the panel spoke about their roles in two distinctly different ways. Two spoke of the clear educator role that children's librarians play in literacy education. The third responded with words of caution about using such terminology for fear that the language of "teacher" would create an expectation by parents that children's librarians alone could create proficient readers and turn children into A students. This aggregate of member-checking, triangulating artifacts, and real-world instances serve to further vouch for the assessment that children's librarians' perception of their educator roles is one that many embrace, but a sizable number still resist for reasons identified in this research.

Discussion

The findings in this study reveal a number of opportunities for the field of children's librarianship to improve and grow. The initial survey responses of Stage 1 revealed significant changes are occurring in the field regarding the children's librarian's emerging role as an educator. This can be seen first by the clear-cut divisions in the responses on the survey about comfortableness with the educator role and by the

comments that refer to the shifting emphasis on educating at their own libraries. Also, the changes tracked in the ALSC competencies editions since 1989, the two Every Child Ready to Read evaluation reports, and the recent creation of education-related jobs such as those held by the interviewees point to a milieu of change that is still unsettling to a substantial portion of the profession. From Stage 2 of the research, two of the interviewees mentioned the need for mindset changes among the staff they train, and, indeed, a growth mindset model such as that researched by Carol Dweck (2006) could encourage children's librarians to see themselves as capable educators and thus, be less likely to fear being a teacher. However, another paradigm offers a way to understand the process the field is undergoing at present, that of Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory (1962).

Initially developed as a marketing tool in 1962 but since used in multiple fields including education, Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory surmises that with each new idea, invention, or product the path of acceptance for it is shaped by five stances of the people who are being targeted—innovators (2.5%), early adopters (13.5%), early majority (34%), late majority (34%), and laggards (16%)—with the third and fourth group representing two-thirds of the entire group. Rogers further found that the key to facilitating the acceptance of something new is to both understand how each of these stances eventually come to accept a change and to speak to the group's interests and values in helping them move toward acceptance. Surprisingly, there appears to be a somewhat similar division as Rogers' five stances demonstrated in the four silhouettes and the group of the five interviewees. It would be inappropriate to use sophisticated statistical measures on the 71 survey responses, for this study was not framed as

quantitative, nor were the responses from a randomized sample. However, it is still interesting to discover that attitudes about being an educator could be separated into four categories that speak to the level of acceptance of an idea innovative to children's librarianship:

- those that strongly oppose the idea (Antoinette) (20%)
- those that oppose, but see some advantages and realities (Newton) (14%)
- those that are more open to being educators (Semantha) (31%)
- those that are solidly in favor of the change, but are not themselves responsible for the innovation (Teagan) (35%).

Further, although there is substantial resistance to the educator role that should be noted and addressed, the numbers that have openness to the change are in the majority 47/71—Teagan 25/71, and Semantha 22/71. This suggests, according to Rogers theory, that the change is taking hold and slowly moving forward. Finally, Rogers advises that the most effective approach for those hoping to have a change adopted is to focus on the early adopters and early majority, as the late majority and laggards will eventually follow. The Every Child Ready to Read initiative could be seen as that early focus on those more open to change as it was voluntarily piloted in several locations. This was followed by libraries across the country choosing whether or not to purchase the kits and training such that by the second evaluation of Every Child Ready to Read in 2017, there were over 6,000 libraries using the program (Neuman et al., 2017).

Rogers further emphasized that “An important factor regarding the adoption rate of an innovation is its compatibility with the values, beliefs, and past experiences of individuals in the social system” (p. 4). This speaks to two aspects of this situation—the

history and the values. Throughout the history of children's librarianship within America, children's librarianship, at different times, embraced and then distanced itself from literacy education in the classroom. At its start, children's librarianship was comfortably and wholeheartedly aligned with the educational goals of the schools according to leaders in both worlds (Dana, 1896; Dewey, 1989). In the middle of the 19th Century, the pressure to use one scientifically assessable way to teach literacy in the schools (i.e., primarily the phonics approach) (Walker, 2008), created a divergence of the two paths. Children's librarians became not as interested in identifying with teachers for fear it would not be as inviting to children who were looking for freedom to choose what they read (Benke, 2019). Thus, although there is precedence for children's librarians to consider themselves educators, there is likewise precedence for them to be leery of any image change that will diminish the allure they have diligently worked to create around reading, books, and libraries.

The second aspect of Rogers' compatibility requirements for change to occur is whether the cultural group's values are respected. In fact, it is the concern that changing their educator roles would not preserve their value of reading being pleasurable that is the top concern expressed by the survey respondents. Children's librarians consistently and consciously emphasize their role in making reading enjoyable. It is significant that over three-fourths of the 71 survey respondents brought up the importance of fun without being prompted by any mention of fun in the survey. Moreover, the importance of fun was mentioned in each of the four silhouette groups. It is most prevalent in the Antoinette silhouette that resisted and feared teaching the most and put the most emphasis on fun as in competition with the idea of being educational. This suggests that making reading

pleasurable is a predominant value that children's librarians hold, and this value would need to be upheld for the diffusion of the idea of children's librarians being educators to endure and take hold. Indeed, the interviews in Stage 3 were held to be able to directly and repeatedly ask children's librarians embracing teaching if they encountered any of the feared lessening of fun in library programs because of their increased educational emphasis. The answer was a resounding "no." Moreover, the interviewees provided a picture of their deep commitment to maintaining fun in library experiences, giving examples of their conversations with reluctant staff, referring to research on the importance of fun in children becoming lifelong readers, and insisting that, if anything, there was more fun in storytimes now that they were based on early literacy research. Combined with the historical proof that children's librarians shielded the enjoyment of reading in the library while phonics instruction was seen as making it less so in the schools, this tenacity on the part of the interviewees in maintaining fun suggests that children's librarians will continue to be the guardians of fun well into the future.

Another implication for the future of the field can be found in the comments of both the survey respondents and the interviewees about graduate library education and professional development opportunities preparing them for teaching. These comments ranged from simple acknowledgment that there had been no classes on teaching in graduate library school, to a litany of the courses that would have better prepared them for the job, to angry outbursts by Antoinette that there would be no acceptance of a teacher role in her job until graduate library schools did their job in preparing her for it. These children's librarians are not alone in noticing the shortcomings of library schools. Prendergast (2016) noted that only 3 library schools from a random sample of 20 offered

courses in early literacy. Julien and Genuis (2011) found that library staff from a variety of libraries who do instructional work only had informal preparation through on-the-job experience, reading training materials on their own, and attending workshops. Further, they found that there was discomfort, ambiguity, and even hostility over the lack of training for a teaching role. In 2014, Cindy C. Welch surveyed instructors of graduate library school children's services courses to find out what had changed in their course content over the last five years. She also asked what changes were being planned by instructors for future classes. Only 10 out of 64 instructors were currently teaching future children's librarians about literacy. Moreover, none of the instructors put literacy among the top three subjects they felt were important to teach future children's librarians.

The subject of professional development opportunities fared only slightly better in the comments from the survey respondents, and they were distributed throughout the silhouettes with the angrier ones expressed by Antoinette. A pervading undercurrent tone was that the opportunities for professional development are scarce and usually limited to attending a webinar. The tone of the responses to a question about professional development revealed an eagerness on the part of Semantha to learn more about literacy education, even though she did not see herself as explicitly "teaching" literacy. Many respondents felt a need for college or graduate level courses in reading or, at least, training in better understanding how their local schools were teaching reading, using leveling systems, or helping struggling readers. Several respondents liked and wanted more of the Every Child Ready to Read trainings. In fact, they expected and wanted future trainings in how to become educators to take the same path and form that Every Child Ready to Read had taken.

These insistent requests for better training in library school and through professional development fit again with the paradigm of successful change offered by Rogers (1962). His theory stresses the importance of truly reflecting the needs of the group by involving them in improvements. It seems obvious library schools would be keen to make changes in how relevant their preparation of children's librarians is considered by graduates, especially since there is ample evidence that directors do not always feel compelled to fill positions with MLS candidates. Even among the interviewees and survey respondents, it is clear that the need to teach in the job is making it more common to hire those with teaching degrees, rather than library degrees.

One last finding from the study focuses on a larger educational horizon for children's librarianship than involvement in formal education. For both Samantha and Teagan and, more especially, for the interviewees, the importance of informal education was key to understanding their educator roles. This was frequently seen in the comments about the best possible future for schools and libraries: a community that valued the contributions of both institutions in educating the entire community. As the Samantha silhouette commented, "We need to position ourselves smartly at the center of public, self-guided education. Think MOOCs [Massive Open Online Courses], but in person." When educators discuss the future of education, many see learning as more of an ongoing, lifelong process with the learning occurring outside the school and integrated into community resources such as public libraries (Dixon-Roman, 2012; Falk & Dierking, 2002; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; O'Beirne, 2010; Zhao, 2009). When this happens, public libraries will need the staff who are skilled in facilitating learning (O'Beirne, 2010). Further, since informal education considers enjoyment of learning as

well as personal choice and flexibility as vital to the experience, this endorsing of informal learning can also be seen as protecting the inclusion of fun, choice, and flexibility in library experiences.

Limitations and Implications for the Future

While the findings of this composite case study are based on the relatively large number of 71 participants for the survey, they are nonetheless not suitable for generalizing to the children's librarian profession as a whole. The responses are self-reported and from a group that is limited to those subscribed to the PUBYAC listserv, willing to volunteer their time, and able to take the survey online. Further, the five interviewees were purposively selected, and their comments also cannot be considered generalizable to the entire group. Finally, this study uncovered certain issues in children's librarianship that have not yet been researched such as the concept of fun and graduate school preparation for teaching.

Fun may seem like a trite, overused word and in multiple ways, it is. Children's librarians' insistence on using it more often than other synonyms is a study unto itself. Is it because it purposefully doesn't sound academic? Is it because it is a word that is universally understood as open-ended? Or, is it simply a cultural rite within the profession such that Hannah, who did not consider herself to be a children's librarian "technically," did not find the word adequate for her purposes? Further exploration of what children's librarians mean by this concept could serve to open opportunities for more precise understanding of constructs of motivation and choice as they apply to libraries.

While the need for graduate library schools to prepare children's librarians for their educator roles was expressed both in the comments of the children's librarians studied here and in the professional literature, this topic requires more study to help those institutions understand what would serve the future of the profession best. Moreover, need for staff prepared to teach is spreading so fast that two of the five interviewees have had formerly MLS-required jobs at their libraries change in the last year to no longer require the advanced library degree.

In my experience, it has long been an exposed nerve in the field of children's librarianship that there is not consistent support from directors on the value and necessity of a graduate library degree for children's librarian positions. In fact, within the 71 survey respondents, there were multiple comments on the frustration, confusion, and demoralizing situations caused by not having it clear who in a library must have a library degree and who does not. In a sample listing of nine children's librarian job descriptions on Webjunction, a site created to help librarians with how to handle different library tasks (https://www.webjunction.org/documents/webjunction/Children_039_s_Librarian_Job_Descriptions.html), there are four sample positions that clearly required an ALA accredited graduate library degree, four that prefer or desire it, but do not require it, and one that says the graduate library degree must be acquired within four years of being hired. Elsewhere, Adkins (2004) reported that more than 85% of job advertisements for children's librarians required a master's degree in library science from 1971-2001.

This is not to say that those without a library degree are unable to perform the job well, and Hannah is a prime example of this. Moreover, Hannah mentioned that she hired former teachers a lot for her department, and her library was gradually opening up the

traditional children's librarian positions in the branches to those with teaching degrees and without library degrees. Irene and Essie commented that their libraries are also starting to hire former teachers for the jobs that used to require graduate library degrees. Their libraries are by no means alone in this shift, but it does raise the question as to whether or not the graduate library degree is worth the money and special effort versus obtaining a teaching degree should children's library work be your career goal. This becomes even more of an issue when the graduate library school experience is faulted by interviewees and survey respondents for not preparing one for the type of work they will encounter, such as teaching. Salary being the most expensive part of any budget, it is not surprising that corners will be cut by directors by hiring someone who has many of the personal characteristics needed for children's librarianship, if not the advanced degree, and then paying them accordingly. Yet, in Hannah's case, the job was posted requiring an equally advanced education degree. They evidently were not interested in someone with only a library degree and only library work experiences.

Does this matter? It brings to mind Kathleen Reif's warning about the future of children's services in public libraries.

If public librarians do not establish a role for our libraries in the continuum of services that help children start school ready to learn, one of two things will surely happen: (1) public libraries will continue to be excluded from discussion and funding; or (2) someone else will define our role for us. . . . Let's work together and create a definition of public librarian that is unique from that of a teacher, but just as essential. (Reif, 2000, p. 267)

Perhaps, if Rief came to know of situations similar to Hannah's, Irene's, and Essie's—and it is not difficult to find others—she would see a third possibility: libraries hiring those with teaching degrees, rather than library degrees to make sure the library could be assured of the teaching skills that are needed and, thus, securing a place at the education table.

The profession would do well to prepare for the next round of changes in what children's librarians will be teaching such as STEM or helping struggling readers by building on the methods proven successful in Every Child Ready to Read initiative. Indeed, Every Child Ready to Read represents tremendous change in children's librarianship and is deserving of serious study to help the profession continue on the path of being well-qualified and well-prepared as educators.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how children's librarians perceive their roles as literacy educators and how this might influence the future of the profession. Through a survey, composite case study analysis, and targeted interviews, a picture emerged that portrayed great change and strong feelings separating groups that were comfortable with teaching and those that were not. Ultimately, a substantial majority of the total 71 people that contributed the initial survey responses accepted their roles as educators and called for a more relevant education and training for children's librarians' future where that role could grow and be well supported. Both through the history of the time period and the comments of the participants, a lot of this change can be seen as spurred by the Every Child Ready to Read initiative which has been characterized as a “sharp turn” in the way libraries now view children's services (Neuman et al., 2017, p. 5).

Despite the strong feelings about their educator roles separating the different silhouettes of children's librarians studied here, there was one over-arching agreement—that fun should continue to be a major part of children's experience of reading and the library. Contrary to seeing this emphasis as distancing the library from education, those who were more comfortable with teaching roles such as Samantha and Teagan saw fun as part of literacy learning. This sentiment was clearly voiced by the interviewees as well. Sensenig (2011) found this viewpoint so consistently and consciously expressed in programs such as storytimes that he studied that he spoke of it as “the importance of being engaged” (2011, p. 105). Yet, a sense of needing to protect fun was expressed in each silhouette. A look to the future through interviews with children's librarians representing the cutting edge of this change suggest that fun is at libraries to stay. Fun is part of the children's library culture, it's part of the identity of children's librarians, and it is part of informal learning. It may undergo some transformation, but, in the same way that Dana called it happiness in 1896 and Mann called it “unbending the mind” (1840, p. 63), there may be new words, but the principle will remain intact. Reading for pleasure is of utmost importance. Children's librarians are guardians of that fun and will make sure it continues.

Epilogue

When Essie was asked if there was anything else she wanted to add to our interview, she was ready. She shared a metaphor with me that she keeps handy in explaining the relationship of librarians and learning with children as opposed to the relationship teachers in the classroom have with them.

I think I always think of librarians as kind of the aunts and uncles of the education world. Aunts and uncles, that's how I always explain it to people. So, schools are the parents, and they have to toe the line, and they have to make sure that the kids are adhering to the standards, and doing everything that they need, where if you are the library, you're more of like an aunt or uncle. You know you can send the kids home when they misbehave. If they're not doing their homework, you don't have to—as a parent or teacher, it's your responsibility to make sure the kid gets the homework done. As their librarian, if they don't want to, they don't have to. All of our programs are low-barriers, are drop-in. You can send them home and ask them to come back the next day. So, we kind of are in the role of the aunt and uncle. I think what we try to do at the library is keep reading fun and keep it so its low stakes. So, for example, you know, leveling books has been very popular for the last 10 years. Our philosophy as librarians *now* are to just try to get kids into just-right books. But if they want to read really hard books, that is perfectly fine. They can read really hard books. They can read really easy books. I think that's the line that we like to toe. That learning should be fun and engaging, and students should be able to read to their interest. . . . That's the message.

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Appendix A

Do children's librarians see themselves as educators?

Benke, Louise

Sent: Monday, March 30, 2015 11:24 AM

To: pubyac@lists.lis.illinois.edu

Hello, Great Brain,

After a lengthy career as a children's librarian, I have gone back to school to learn more about the reading process and the librarian's role in it. Currently I am conducting a qualitative research study on **children's librarians in public libraries**. If this is you, would you be willing to take a survey?

The survey is designed to be the conversation I wish I could have with you about your feelings and opinions on the topic of if/how you as a children's librarian in a public library view yourself as a literacy educator. It should not take more than 30-45 minutes to complete and you are free to be as brief or as lengthy as you wish. Results will be kept anonymous and potential risks to you are minimal. Sorry! No iPad drawings or other remuneration. There is simply the hope that you will enjoy writing down your personal viewpoints and receive satisfaction in knowing your voice is heard and contributing to research about our field. If you wish, results can be shared with you at the end of the study.

The link to take the survey is https://unco.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cTLOTX511HxcAnz

The survey will remain open **until Monday, April 13**. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you!

Louise F. Benke

Educational Psychology

University of Northern Colorado

Louise.benke@unco.edu

Appendix B

Children's Librarians as Literacy Educators

Q29 CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO Project Title: Children's Librarians As Literacy Educators Researchers: Louise Benke, Educational Psychology and Lisa Rue, Ph. D., Applied Statistics and Research Methods Phone: 970-222-2128 Email: louise.benke@unco.edu Purpose and Description: The purpose of this study is to examine how children's librarians see their role in literacy education for children and their parents. Data will be collected primarily from open-ended surveys that take approximately 35-45 minutes to complete. They will be completed online by children's librarians who are on library-related listservs, social media sites, or who are acquainted with the researcher Louise Benke and have shared their email addresses. This consent form establishes that as a participant in these surveys and interviews, you are agreeing to the use of your comments in this study. Potential risks in this project are minimal. The questions require the type of information that would be considered normal and usual in the everyday work world of public libraries and should not place the respondents at more than very minimal risk of being embarrassed or uncomfortable, nor should there be any risk to their jobs or personal lives. At the end of the project, we would be happy to share your data with you at your request. When we report data, we will make every effort to keep your contributions anonymous. However, it is not possible to guarantee your anonymity. Data collected and analyzed for this study will be kept in an electronic file which is only accessible by the researchers. Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Q30 Have you read the consent form and do you consent to participate in this study

- ☐ Yes (9)
- ☐ No (10)

Q39 Please type your first and last name below. (This is for the purposes of verifying your consent only. Your name will not be kept with the responses and no participants will be identified in the reporting of the data.)

Q43 Tips for taking this survey: If you want to go back to earlier questions, there is a “back” button at the bottom of each page. Your progress on the survey will be saved if you leave and return to it on the same computer.

Q1 What is the official title of your current job?

Q31 Does this job require a graduate library degree?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Other (Please explain) (3) _____

Q2 Age

- ☐ 21-30 (1)
- ☐ 31-40 (2)
- ☐ 41-50 (3)
- ☐ 51-60 (4)
- ☐ 61-70 (5)
- ☐ >70 (6)

Q4 Please briefly describe your educational background. (e.g., B.A. major, M.L.A., M.L.I.S., or M.A. majors, other degrees, etc.)

Q5 Please briefly describe other kinds of work you have done besides public library work.

Q6 How long have you worked in libraries?

Q7 Why did you want to work with children in a public library?

Q8 Which of the following are you frequently responsible for in your work? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ a. Storytimes or storytelling programs (1)
- ☐ b. Craft programs for children (2)
- ☐ c. Informational programs for children (3)
- ☐ d. Tours of the library for children or their caregivers (4)
- ☐ e. Presentations to groups of children or caregivers (e.g., up to 2 hrs.) (5)
- ☐ f. Technology or Internet programs for children (6)
- ☐ g. Parent workshops/informational programs (7)
- ☐ h. Day care providers workshops/informational programs (9)
- ☐ i. Readers advisory for children or their caregivers (10)
- ☐ j. Other children-related services or programs (Please describe) (11)

Q9 What are some of the things you enjoy most about presenting in these situations?

Q10 What are some of the things you enjoy least about presenting in these situations?

Q12 Would you say you are "teaching" someone in any of these? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ a. Storytimes or storytelling programs (1)
 - ☐ b. Craft programs for children (2)
 - ☐ c. Informational programs for children (3)
 - ☐ d. Tours of the library for children or their caregivers (4)
 - ☐ e. Presentations to groups of children or their caregivers (e.g., up to 2 hrs.) (5)
 - ☐ f. Technology or Internet programs for children (6)
 - ☐ g. Parent workshops/informational programs (7)
 - ☐ h. Day care providers workshops/informational programs (8)
 - ☐ i. Readers advisory for children or their caregivers (10)
 - ☐ j. Other children-related services or programs (Please describe) (11)
-

Q11 If you checked one or more of the items above, please give an example of your teaching in one of these events.

Q14 Which, if any, of the following descriptors (other than librarian) are you comfortable using in describing your role as you work with children or their parents/caregivers? (Choose as many as apply.)

- ☐ a. Teacher (1)
- ☐ b. Educator (2)
- ☐ c. Instructor (3)
- ☐ d. Information professional (4)
- ☐ e. Literacy specialist/expert (5)
- ☐ f. Trainer (6)
- ☐ g. Coach (7)
- ☐ h. Guide (8)
- ☐ i. Other (9) _____

Q32 List one descriptor you chose that you feel fits very well and tell if you think the public would value your role more or less if you were referred to by that term. Please explain.

Q15 If you purposely avoided some of the descriptors, list one of them you feel strongly about avoiding and say why.

Q16 What do you think the advantages would be if teaching were more clearly defined as part of your role?

Q26 What do you think the disadvantages would be if teaching were more clearly defined as part of your role?

Q18 How prepared do you feel to be a teacher in your library work? Add comments if you would like.

- ☐ a. Very well prepared (1) _____
- ☐ b. Somewhat prepared (2) _____
- ☐ c. Neither prepared or unprepared (3) _____
- ☐ d. Somewhat unprepared (4) _____
- ☐ e. Very unprepared (5) _____

Q40 How well prepared do you feel you know the basics of early literacy skills for infants through preschool in order to share with parents? Add specifics if you would like.

- ☐ a. Very well prepared (1) _____
- ☐ b. Somewhat prepared (2) _____
- ☐ c. Neither prepared or unprepared (3) _____
- ☐ d. Somewhat unprepared (4) _____
- ☐ e. Very unprepared (5) _____

Q41 How well prepared do you feel in the basics of literacy instruction for children in grades Kindergarten through 2nd grade in order to share with parents? Add specifics if you would like.

- ☐ a. Very well prepared (1) _____
- ☐ b. Somewhat prepared (2) _____
- ☐ c. Neither prepared or unprepared (3) _____
- ☐ d. Somewhat unprepared (4) _____
- ☐ e. Very unprepared (5) _____

Q42 How well prepared do you feel in the basics of helping children who struggle with reading in order to help parents who don't understand? Add specifics if you would like.

- ☐ a. Very well prepared (1) _____
- ☐ b. Somewhat prepared (2) _____
- ☐ c. Neither prepared or unprepared (3) _____
- ☐ d. Somewhat unprepared (4) _____
- ☐ e. Very unprepared (5) _____

Q19 If your library offered professional development to help you be better prepared to help parents with their children's literacy skills through teaching/better teaching, what would it include?

Q22 Here's a scenario for you to consider: You are working one evening and a parent approaches you and confides how her 2nd grade son is struggling to read and she doesn't know how to help him. What are some of the ways you might handle this?

Q23 Here's another scenario: A public library recently changed advertisements about their infant storytimes to say "Classes that teach the foundations of reading to infants and toddlers, including letter recognition, rhyme, alliteration, etc." How do you think you would react to this change?

Q37 If you were to describe the best possible future of both education and public libraries, how might the role of children's librarians change in that scenario?

Q25 Thank you for your answers! If you would be willing to talk by phone or Skype for a few follow-up questions as needed, please give your email address here.

Appendix C

Email to send to PUBYAC listserv or other librarian contacts

What does your job title say?

I am a doctoral candidate writing a dissertation on how children's librarians do or do not see themselves as educators. I am trying to find librarians in public libraries who have a position title that specifically reflects an educational role, e.g., job titles that include words such as

- Education
- Educational
- Educator
- Learning
- Teaching
- Teacher
- Instructor
- Instruction
- Curriculum

Do you, or anyone you know, have such a job title? I would be most appreciative if you would contact me at louise.benke@unco.edu no later than July 31. Thank you!

Lu Benke
University of Northern Colorado
School of Educational Psychology

Appendix D

CHILDREN'S LIBRARIANS' SELF-PERCEPTIONS AS LITERACY EDUCATORS

Interview Questions for Three to Five Additional Children's Librarians

The interviews will be semi-structured, and the questions related to the research questions. Before proceeding with the interview, I will orally repeat the basics of the consent request:

The purpose of this study is to examine how children's librarians see their role in literacy education for children and their parents. The consent form that was included in the survey you completed established that as a participant in these surveys and interviews, you are agreeing to the use of your comments in this study. Potential risks in this project are minimal. When we report data, we will separate your name from the data and make every effort to keep your contributions confidential. However, it is not possible to guarantee your anonymity.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study, and you may decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Do you have any questions?

Do you give your consent to proceed with the interview?

1. As we begin the interview, please briefly describe your surroundings, especially things such as the location, the presence of other people and activities nearby, and anything that would give me a picture of what you are currently experiencing.
2. What is your job title?
3. How long have you been in this job?
4. Can you briefly describe for me your personal path to being in this job?
5. How long has this job had this title?
6. What are the reasons behind this job having an education-related title?
7. Are there other reasons behind this job title having an education-related emphasis that aren't officially talked about? If yes, can you tell me about them?
8. Are there policy documents such as a strategic plan that are tied to your job's emphasis?
9. Did the education-related title affect your interest in the job and if so, how?
10. How do parents react to your job title?
11. How do school teachers relate to your job title?
12. What, if any, effect has the education-related title had on other people who interact with you professionally?

13. Do you know of other libraries changing the children's librarians' jobs to be considered more education-related? Please tell me about them.
14. Did graduate library school prepare you for this job?
15. If you could change your job title, what would you change it to and why? What are your thoughts about librarians being educators?
16. Have your thoughts about this changed over time? If yes, tell me about those changes.
17. Tell me about one of your earlier children's librarian positions. What was the title of that job?
18. Did that earlier job involve you being an educator? How?
19. How does the educating you did in your earlier job compare to how you educate in your current job?
20. As you look back on how you answered the survey, do you think the educator role implied by your job title affected your survey answers? Can you give an example?
21. What difference does it make if you consider yourself an educator in your job or not? Would you do your job any differently?
22. Tell me what you understand about informal education and how it relates to your job?
23. What kinds of professional development is most helpful for you in this position?
24. What differences do you see between these terms? (Mention all four up front.)
 - a. Teacher
 - b. Educator
 - c. Informal educator
 - d. Children's librarian
25. Below are some of the fears that other children's librarians have expressed about changes that would happen if they were considered a teacher or educator in their jobs. Have any of these concerns manifested themselves in your current job? If so, how?
 - a. Having to deal with assessments; standardized tests; grading; homework
 - b. Having to discipline children a lot
 - c. Teacher accountability; parents' expectation of my teaching their child to read

- d. Not having the necessary license; content knowledge; best practices;
pedagogy knowledge; preparatory coursework
 - e. Not able to do anything with kids just for fun; reading experiences that are
forced or unhappy
 - f. Current lack of respect for the teaching profession
 - g. Politics of education
 - h. Confusion for the public on the different roles professionals hold in literacy education
26. You mention “fun” several times in your survey responses (and in our conversation now). Can you tell me more about why “fun” is so important in your
work with children and if you think that has anything to say about the learning or
education that is occurring?
27. Is there anything else that you want to share about your job experience in relation
to the public library’s role in literacy education?

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

Many years ago, in a conversation with a friend who was a schoolteacher, I expressed my frustration with certain practices among teachers in K-12 schools. From my viewpoint as a longtime children's librarian at the local public library, teachers who insisted children should only read books at their specific Accelerated Reading (AR) level were squelching children's interest in reading anything at all when they came to the public library. His response was not to argue with me, but to simply reply, "Well, we teach them to read," as if that settled the matter.

So began one of many quests to figure out exactly what was the role of children's librarians in helping children become proficient lifelong readers. The study presented here examined this subject from two angles. It first examined this role historically, comparing the path that the profession has taken since its inception in 1876 in comparison to the paths of literacy instruction in the schools and informal learning in communities. Secondly, this study examined how children's librarians today perceive their roles as literacy educators and how that perception may shape the future of the profession. These issues were addressed in two articles, "It's All Fun and Games Until Someone Learns to Read, Then It's Educational" (see Chapter IV) and "Guardians of the Fun" (see Chapter V). The first article served as an extensive literature review and comparative historical analysis of the profession between its inception in 1876 and the

turn of the century in 2000. The purpose was to provide children's librarians with an understanding of their past as they choose their direction for the future. The second article covered three qualitative studies I used designed to answer these research questions:

- Q1 How do children's librarians see their role within literacy education?
- Q2 How do they feel about that role?
- Q3 Where is there obvious consensus?
- Q4 How might this influence the future of the profession?

In the first article, "It's All Fun and Games Until Someone Learns to Read, Then It's Educational," the three paths of children's librarians as educators, the evolution of reading instruction in the schools, and the legitimizing of informal learning were followed for 124 years. This survey showed that children's librarians' role in literacy instruction was strongly present around the beginning of the 1900s to moving to the background 50 years later. Throughout this time period, children's librarians maintained the strong value that reading should be pleasurable for children. Towards the end of the 20th Century, vital early literacy research refocused the children's librarian field on the issue of being literacy educators through their early childhood programming such as storytimes. Paralleling these changes, reading instruction shifted around the 1950s to being considered successful only through explicit instruction in the classroom which, in contrast to the library experience, was frequently less than fun. Then literacy instruction shifted again to briefly embrace the whole language movement and research on its components that related well to the immersive and encouraging techniques used in public libraries. Meanwhile, the significance of informal learning in literacy grew toward the

end of the 20th Century through new theories about the pervasiveness of social-cultural influence, the importance of family literacy, the promise of individualized learning, and the knowledge expansion of the information age. Moreover, definitions of informal learning as a lifelong activity that is voluntary and engaging emerged promoting clearer alliance with the pleasurable learning occurring in public libraries.

The research design I used to address the research questions in the second article, “Guardians of Fun,” was a three-stage process of a basic qualitative study, a composite case study, and a multiple case study, with each stage providing a deeper, more complete answer to the four research questions. Using the results from an open-ended survey in the first and second stages allowed a definition of the issue in the basic qualitative study and then a further embodying of the *what* and *how* of the issue in the composite case study. Finally, five interviewees purposively selected for their involvement with the issue allowed for different perspectives to be showcased in a multiple case study which answered the question of how the future of children’s librarianship may be affected.

Stage 1 Findings

In the basic qualitative study of Stage 1 of this study, I found that three-fourths of the 85 respondents saw focusing on fun an integral part of the library experience as an important aspect of their jobs. Further, the title of “teacher” was avoided by the majority of these respondents, but “educator” was a title most could live with. Also, although an overwhelming majority felt prepared to teach early literacy to parents and caregivers in their jobs, their responses split three ways when it came to conveying how comfortable respondents felt with teaching: very uncomfortable; very comfortable; and comfortable, but using terminology that did not explicitly own a teaching role. Finally, overall, there appeared to be clear variations in attitudes among the 85 respondents, with the group

dividing into three or more distinct camps of feelings on several issues. These findings served as a cursory answer to the first three research questions regarding children's librarians' perceptions, feelings, and simple majority agreements across the entire group.

Stage 1 Discussion

This strong division of opinions on several issues in the findings for Stage 1 of the research indicated to me that the profession was in the process of change. Also, the changes tracked in the ALSC competencies editions since 1989, the two Every Child Ready to Read evaluation reports, and the recent creation of education-related jobs such as those held by the interviewees, pointed to a milieu of change that is still unsettling to a substantial portion of the profession.

In addition, the emphasis on fun in the responses revealed a clear consensus on how important respondents felt that making library experiences enjoyable was an important focus in their jobs. This is particularly interesting in that this finding was not anticipated; none of the questions on the survey asked about fun or any of the words related to fun, yet it appeared in responses throughout. This strongly suggested fun not only played a key role in children's librarians' perceptions of their jobs, but also was important to mention when talking about comfort levels with a teaching role.

Stage 2 Findings

In the second stage of the research, the group of 85 survey respondents was narrowed to 71 who had graduate library degrees. This group was then aligned into three groups of respondents according to a priori codes defining the level of comfort with a teaching role. Upon closer examination of the group that was most uncomfortable with teaching, I found that there was a segment of the group that was also uncomfortable with a teaching role, but these respondents recognized that it was already occurring in their

jobs and it was valuable. Further, although this segment of the group was definitely fearful of teaching, they were considerably milder in their comments than the rest of that group. Thus, four groups were identified along the continuum of comfort with the teaching role:

- Uncomfortable with teaching—14 respondents
- Recognizing the value of teaching in job, but very uncomfortable with it—10 respondents
- Comfortable with making learning happening without using direct teaching language—22 respondents
- Comfortable with teaching—25 respondents

These results indicated that a clear majority of the entire group of respondents, or 47/71, were comfortable with teaching. Moreover, in tallying those in the entire group that had prior teaching experience, I found that 45% had prior teaching experience.

Additional significant findings in the composite case study of this stage of the research were found when the groupings of respondents according to the four levels of comfort with teaching were then shaped into composite personas called silhouettes. These silhouettes were named:

- Antoinette for those the least comfortable with teaching
- Newton for those uncomfortable, but recognizing the value of teaching
- Semantha for those comfortable with making learning happen, but choosing not to use teaching language
- Teagan for those most comfortable with teaching and the language associated with it

Within the silhouettes, it could more easily be seen how something like lack of a teaching degree in Antoinette was associated with more fear and anger about having a teaching role and at the same time, more associated than with other silhouettes with insisting that library experiences should be fun. Similarly, those with teaching degrees and/or teaching experiences—Teagan—were decidedly more comfortable with the teaching role. Newton, who had fewer years of experience in library work than Antoinette, was milder in his objections to a teaching role and expressed a preference for a gentler descriptor of his role—that of *guide*. As for being prepared to teach, Samantha joined with Teagan in more clearly wishing that library school and professional development opportunities would better prepare them and their colleagues. The two of them also were clearer in accepting the importance of the children’s librarian role as an informal educator. Samantha, who seemed to avoid using words like “teach” or “teacher” in talking about how she facilitated the learning of children and parents, yet felt very positive about her role in it, also showed an indecisiveness about advertising a baby storytime as a “class” in literacy. Throughout the silhouettes, uncomfortableness with the idea of naming an infant storytime a class in literacy was most frequently tied to the idea that it would preclude the idea that it was fun.

The findings through the silhouettes seem to imply that certain attitudes are associated with certain life and work experiences. However, silhouettes were equally useful in displaying that certain attitudes occur throughout all of the silhouettes, regardless of previous experiences, even if to varying degrees. For example, throughout all silhouettes, the importance of fun was still prominent, although mostly so for Antoinette and least so for Newton. Antoinette’s use of insistence on fun seemed to say

that she feels an increased teaching role represented a threat to the fun she felt was one of the best parts of her job. Also, throughout all silhouettes, there were definite apprehensions concerning the negatives of the teaching profession infiltrating children's librarians' jobs. This occurred even in Teagan, who was quite comfortable with teaching. Taken together, these findings gave answers with more depth to the first three research questions regarding children's librarians' perceptions, feelings, and agreement on their teaching roles in their jobs.

Stage 2 Discussion

The grouping of the respondents into silhouettes for a composite case study allowed a more nuanced interpretation of the results than was possible in Stage 1 of the research. There were, for example, some indications that the lack of preparation to teach is associated with strong negative feelings about having a teaching role. This could send a clear message to those hiring children's librarians as well as where to spend scarce professional development funds. Also, an understanding of the library as a place of informal learning seemed connected to greater acceptance of the teaching role, and this may have implications for how to frame the changes in roles. This also fit especially well for those concerned that fun would be diminished since informal learning is clearly tied to choice, enjoyment, and engagement. Further, Samantha's indecisiveness about advertising an infant storytime as a class in literacy may have spoken to her commitment to always choose fun over an educational purpose if they are in conflict. This understanding could be helpful in smoothing transitions with children's librarians who are uncomfortable with new roles by addressing the specifics of how the enjoyment of reading and the library will continue. Further, they could be assured that if a new, more

consciously educational way of presenting programs does get in the way of fun, that children's librarians will be supported in modifying programs to maintain the fun.

The silhouettes also served to point out that certain concerns were shared by all respondents to some degree, regardless of their individual experiences and backgrounds. Thus, these pervasive concerns need to be addressed. For example, teaching as a profession had a reputation of having a variety of stressors such as accountability measures, rigid curriculums, and political pressures. These stressors came up among each of the groups, even though it was least among those that were comfortable teaching. This may imply a need for the profession to be more proactive in describing what specifically the role of the children's librarian is, and how significantly it varies from the duties of the library assistant or library shelver, yet is a role for a literacy educator in its own right, distinct from that of a classroom teacher. There were frequent complaints among the respondents that were most clearly expressed by Samantha. She felt that the public was not aware of these differences and made assumptions that do not give children's librarians credit for the level of education and expertise required, causing their jobs to be less effective overall and less effective in reaching those that need their services.

Key among the fears of possible changes to the children's librarian's role was the worry that opportunities to make library and reading experiences fun would be diminished. Significant in this finding was that there is currently very little done to help children's librarians—and teachers, for that matter—to understand how important motivation and play is in creating lifelong readers and learners. For example, practice in reading is crucial in creating a lifelong reader and practice is more likely to happen when a child is motivated by enjoying the activity. As another example, Lego building

programs in libraries are seen by some as simply play, despite the program's underpinnings of research on the benefits of block building in preparing children's minds to recognize the shapes of letters. If armed with research findings and education on this and other theories behind literacy, children's librarians would be better prepared to justify the inclusion of fun as legitimate in educational programming. Finally, the findings in Stage 2 of this research showed that both a majority of the respondents and the majority of stances or silhouettes understood that teaching *is* becoming a role for children's librarians. This could be further interpreted as a possible indication that the idea of children's librarians as teachers has taken hold and a critical mass has accepted it.

Stage 3 Findings

In Stage 3 of this research, I interviewed five children's librarians—Irene, Alice, Essie, Nancy, and Hannah—and asked questions to find out if the fears about teaching expressed by the 71 respondents played out in their jobs that were openly labeled as involving teaching. These interviews were formatted as multiple case studies with the purpose of specifically answering the fourth research question of whether this change in roles might influence the future of the profession.

Four out of five interviewees revealed they have teaching degrees, and four out of five had taught before. All were comfortable with being called an educator, but only two were also comfortable with being called a teacher or an information specialist which, again, followed the pattern of the Teagan silhouette. As for feeling like they were prepared to teach, the interviewee's responses were even more strongly marked as being prepared to teach than in the Teagan group. More than the other groups, the interviewees were clear that graduate school did not prepare them to teach, and that it was important that the profession's graduate education do so. The importance of language in describing

roles came through as one of the findings among the interviewees with Irene's library system most clearly using language to improve their standing in the community and their place at the table as educators. All of the interviewees were clear that fun had not diminished at all in their library systems as a result of a new, stronger emphasis on education, and, indeed, each had a particular slant on its vibrancy. Alice said the storytimes were even more fun as a result of retooling them with conscious educational purposes; Irene regularly shared with her staff the research behind the use of humor and fun in learning; Essie pointed out the pragmatics of libraries continually needing fun to get customers to voluntarily come in through the doors, and this was echoed by Irene who quipped that children come into the library "by choice or by parent."

As predicted, including Hannah as an interviewee despite the fact she did not meet the criterion of being "technically a librarian," did serve to point out some differences between a teaching identity and a children's librarian identity. How Hannah spoke of fun is a clear indication of this. Hannah admitted she did not use the word "fun" very often, instead talking about her programs as positive, joyful experiences that had a "warm, fuzzy" component that did not always connote fun to her. Her experience at being hired for the job specifically because of her background in education was a further example of how her experiences pointed out the change occurring in how public libraries represented by Hannah's, Essie's, and Irene's libraries as well as others, are frequently hiring those who have education degrees, but not requiring library degree.

An interesting finding from the interviewees was the role that the ECRR initiative played in easing children's librarians into educator roles. There was no mention of Every Child Ready to Read in the interview questions, and, thus, mention of it by the

interviewees showed that ECRR had a strong enough influence in the library landscape for the interviewees to bring it up themselves. Interviewee after interviewee referred to the arrival of ECRR as an era when children's librarians became educators of early literacy in storytimes.

Finally, when the interviewees talked about the future worlds of schools and libraries, they first supported more collaborating, but they then went out of their way to put that vision in the context of an overall educational picture that included the entire lifespan, the whole community, and both formal and informal learning.

Stage 3 and Overall Discussion

Many of the themes from Stage 3 of the research offered implications for the profession to learn and grow. For example, two of the interviewees mentioned the need for mindset changes among the staff they train, and, indeed, a growth mindset model such as that researched by Carol Dweck (2006) could encourage children's librarians to see themselves as capable educators and likely less fearful of being a teacher. Otherwise, the findings from Stage 3 can be combined with the findings from the two earlier stages to inform an overall discussion for this entire study.

For example, there is a paradigm from marketing research that offers a way to understand the process the field is undergoing at present. Everett Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory (1962) was initially developed as a marketing tool in 1962, but has since been used in multiple fields including education. This theory surmises that with each new idea, invention, or product, the path of acceptance for it is shaped by five stances of the people who are being targeted. These stances and the percentage of the group distributed among them are innovators (2.5%), early adopters (13.5%), early majority (34%), late majority (34%), and laggards (16%). Note that the third and fourth

group represent two-thirds of the entire group. Rogers further found that one of the keys to facilitating the acceptance of something new is to understand that each of the five stances eventually come to accept a change, despite initial resistance, and that each does it in their own way and time. Another key to encouraging acceptance that Rogers found is to speak to the group's interests and values in helping them move toward compliance. Surprisingly, in the four silhouettes and the grouping of the five interviewees there appears to be a somewhat similar division as Rogers' five stances. It would be inappropriate to use sophisticated statistical measures on the 71 survey responses, for this study was not framed as quantitative, nor were the responses from a randomized sample. However, it is still interesting to discover that attitudes about being an educator could be separated into four categories that also seem to reflect the different levels of acceptance of an idea innovative to children's librarianship, although in different distributions than found in Rogers' model:

- those that strongly oppose the idea (Antoinette) (20%)
- those that oppose, but see some advantages and realities (Newton) (14%)
- those that are more open to being educators (Semantha) (31%)
- those that are solidly in favor of the change, but are not themselves responsible for the innovation (Teagan) (35%).

Further, although there was substantial resistance to the educator role that should be noted and addressed, it has already been noted that the numbers that had openness to the change were in the majority 47/71—Teagan, 25/71, and Semantha, 22/71. This suggested, similar to Rogers theory, that the change is taking hold and slowly moving forward. Finally, Rogers advised that the most effective approach for those hoping to

have a change adopted is to focus on the early adopters and early majority, as the late majority and laggards will eventually follow. The Every Child Ready to Read initiative could be seen as that early focus on those more open to change as it was voluntarily piloted in several locations. This was followed by libraries across the country choosing whether or not to purchase the kits and training such that by the second evaluation of Every Child Ready to Read in 2017, there were over 6,000 libraries using the program (Neuman et al., 2017).

Rogers further emphasized that “An important factor regarding the adoption rate of an innovation is its compatibility with the values, beliefs, and past experiences of individuals in the social system” (1962, p. 4). This speaks to two aspects of this situation—the history and the values. As seen in Chapter IV, throughout the history of children’s librarianship within America, children’s librarianship, at different times, embraced and then distanced itself from literacy education in the classroom when an alliance would threaten their value of reading as enjoyable. Thus, although there’s precedence in their history for children’s librarians to consider themselves educators, there is likewise precedence for them to be leery of any image change that will diminish the allure they have diligently worked to create around reading, books, and libraries.

Undoubtedly, making reading and library experiences pleasurable is a predominant value that children’s librarians hold today, and this value would need to be upheld for the diffusion of the idea of children’s librarians being educators to endure and take hold. Indeed, the interviews in Stage 3 were held to be able to directly and repeatedly ask children’s librarians embracing teaching if they encountered any of the feared lessening of fun in library programs because of their increased educational

emphasis. The answer was a resounding “no.” Moreover, the interviewees provided a picture of their deep commitment to maintaining fun in library experiences, giving examples of their conversations with reluctant staff, referring to research on the importance of fun in children becoming lifelong readers, and insisting that, if anything, there was more fun in storytimes now that they were based on early literacy research. Combined with the historical proof that children’s librarians shielded the enjoyment of reading in the library while phonics instruction was seen as making it less so in the schools, this tenacity on the part of the interviewees in maintaining fun suggests that children’s librarians will continue to be the guardians of fun well into the future.

Limitations

While the findings of the composite case study were based on the relatively large number of 71 participants for the survey, they are nonetheless not suitable for generalizing to the children’s librarian profession as a whole. The responses were self-reported and from a group that was limited to those subscribed to the PUBYAC listserv who were willing to volunteer their time and able to take the survey online. Further, the five interviewees were purposively selected, and their comments also cannot be considered generalizable to the entire group of children’s librarians. Finally, this study uncovered certain issues in children’s librarianship that prompt further research on the concept of fun and graduate school preparation for teaching.

Fun may seem like a trite, overused word and in multiple ways, it is. Children’s librarians’ insistence on using it more often than other synonyms is a study unto itself. Is it because it purposefully doesn’t sound academic? Is it because it is a word that is universally understood as open-ended? Or, is it simply a cultural rite within the profession such that Hannah, who did not consider herself to be a children’s librarian

“technically,” did not find the word adequate for her purposes? Further exploration of what children’s librarians mean by this concept could serve to open opportunities for more precise understanding of constructs of motivation and choice as they apply to libraries.

While the need for graduate library schools to prepare children’s librarians for their educator roles was expressed both in the comments of the children’s librarians studied here and in the professional literature, this topic requires more study to help those institutions understand what would serve the future of the profession best. Moreover, need for staff prepared to teach is spreading so fast that two of the five interviewees have had formerly MLS-required jobs at their libraries change in the last year to no longer require the advanced library degree. In my experience, it has long been an exposed nerve in the field of children’s librarianship that there is not consistent support from directors on the value and necessity of a graduate library degree for children’s librarian positions. This is not to say that those without a library degree are unable to perform the job well, and Hannah is a prime example of this. Yet, the profession’s list of expected competencies (ALSC, 2015) continues to strongly recommend a master’s degree in Library and Information Science. From the point of economic survival of graduate library schools alone, addressing these inadequacies is a must.

Does this matter for the future of the profession? It brings to mind Kathleen Reif’s warning about the future of children’s services in public libraries.

If public librarians do not establish a role for our libraries in the continuum of services that help children start school ready to learn, one of two things will surely happen: (1) public libraries will continue to be excluded from discussion

and funding; or (2) someone else will define our role for us. . . . Let's work together and create a definition of public librarian that is unique from that of a teacher, but just as essential. (Reif, 2000, p. 267)

Perhaps, if Rief came to know of situations similar to Hannah's, Irene's, and Essie's—and it is not difficult to find others—she would see a third possibility: libraries hiring those with teaching degrees, rather than library degrees to make sure the library could be assured of the teaching skills that are needed and, thus, securing a place at the education table. Perhaps the staff of the children's department in public libraries of the future will become an increasing hybrid mix of those whose jobs are to act as “educators” with different titles on their nametags, and those who are “children's librarians” who have the MLS degree, but must turn to those with the education-related degree (and not necessarily an MLS) to put a stamp of approval on all programs.

The profession would do well to prepare for the next round of changes in what children's librarians will be teaching (such as STEM or helping struggling readers) by building on the methods proven successful in the Every Child Ready to Read initiative. Indeed, Every Child Ready to Read represents tremendous change in children's librarianship and is deserving of serious study to help the profession continue on the path of being well-qualified, well-versed in research, and well-prepared as educators.

Conclusions and Implications for the Future

Children's librarianship has always appealed to me for the gentle way that it invites children to become readers. The motto of “the right book for the right child at the right time” seemed so very forward thinking when I first encountered it in library school in 1971. As decades in the profession passed, I kept being struck by how I could see and

experience every day how powerful even this gentle and open encouragement could be in creating readers. It led me to wonder how much my profession paralleled that of classroom teachers and how my fellow library professionals felt about their roles as literacy educators. Could something be learned by how these questions were answered throughout history? Additionally, would a retrospective view allow us to learn from the past and look further down the road for our profession?

Teachers and children's librarians in the late 19th Century each wanted to help create lifelong learners in a more targeted way than society had been doing through informal learning in the home. This was expressed in the early years as wanting to create moral and upright citizens who read only the best literature. As behaviorism and progressivism alternated their influences, teachers were told to focus on creating the product of a graduate who could succeed in a job. Children's librarians were more freely allowed to focus on the interests of the child as they, too, worked to help children be successful in society. To accomplish their similar goals, the two professions evolved and defined their varying roles in the process. This ultimately meant that the focus on issues such as direct instruction, discrete reading skills, and testing required in schools came to diverge at times from the pleasure, choice, access, and intrinsic motivation to learn that was the focus in public libraries, specifically, and in informal learning, generally. For a while, it also meant that children's librarians downplayed their roles as educators when that identity appeared to threaten their reputation as keeping reading pleasurable.

The era of the Learning Society arriving late in the 20th Century accommodated a more global perspective and a more omnipresent role of learning than was present in the first century of these two institutions. This meant that schools were gradually becoming

more accepting of the importance of informal learning such as in preschool years and in family literacy. Public libraries, meanwhile, were more gradually owning their powerful place as centers of informal learning where, even if reading is purposefully fun, it is still legitimately educational. In different ways, more current research and theory on literacy was causing the two paths to overlap. For example, the research-based effectiveness of independent reading in children becoming proficient readers (i.e., the same way children's librarians encourage reading) was increasingly promoted for formal schooling. As the future of education is predicted to be more individualized and technology-driven, both teachers and children's librarians are recognizing the swelling demand for informal learning. In effect, at the turn of the millennium, the literacy educators on these three paths came to a place where they may not have been on the very same road, but they could more clearly see and acknowledge each other from where they were standing. More importantly, they could see how they each represent a narrower path on the broader road of lifelong learning. For libraries, this is especially significant. Rarely in the past were librarians called upon to announce their roles as purveyors of informal education. Real worth seemed to be defined by pointing out their alignment with formal education (Sensenig, 2012). The Learning Society's marketplace of ideas, information, and continuous learning is helping to reframe that situation and recognize the force of informal learning. Public libraries would do well to embrace this alliance.

Will children's librarianship be able to maintain its commitment to "reading as fun" into the future? The profession started by straddling the paths of formal and informal learning. Even when the paths moved apart, children's librarians stayed committed to the goals more in alignment with informal learning—teaching children to love reading. This

suggests that even as children's librarians of the new millennium find themselves hailed as early literacy educators with connections to curriculums and standards, they will hold to learning and reading as pleasurable. Learning to read is a complex interactive social and cultural process, and each child comes to it with his or her own unique background, goals, and individual ways of learning. This historical journey solidifies that teachers *and* children's librarians—*and* parents—are critical in making that individual journey successful.

There remain, however, some questions for the future that the leaders of children's librarianship may want to address. This historical survey came to a stop at the turn of the 21st Century. It was then that children's librarianship embarked on a significantly wider path. In 2000, the Every Child Ready to Read @Your Library (ECRR) initiative took shape and rapidly spread throughout the country (Ash & Meyers, 2009). The influence that ECRR exerted on children's librarianship deserves substantial attention and research. It is true that children's librarians were already announcing they were the "preschoolers" door to learning" (Walter, 2001, p. 12) and already creating programs for preschoolers and even toddlers (Heaviside & Farris, 1995) before the year 2000. However, there were several key directions they had not yet taken. Namely, as is summarized in the evaluations of the ECRR (Neuman & Celano, 2010; Neuman et al., 2017), this major initiative taught that children's librarians need to be intentionally teaching and involving parents, rather than excluding them from the storytime room. Children's librarians need to partner with community organizations to reach all of our community, rather than insisting everyone should come to the library building. Children's librarians need to embrace research as the guiding light for doing what they do best even

better. Finally, children's librarians need to evolve their professional identity to include the primary role of educator, because that is what they are, and ECRR is demonstrating that to them and their communities.

A recent forum on the future of public libraries (Foote, 2014; Kim, 2014) emphasized that the future of education will require libraries to fully participate in the new individualized, technology-based, lifespan-long approach to learning that resides largely outside formal schools (Zhao, 2009). I submit that a crucial and much-needed step to prepare for that direction is a major reconstruction of the graduate school curriculum for children's librarians. If children's librarians are to be effective educators, they should be able to depend on their graduate school education to prepare them for that. Included would be the theoretical groundings and research-based practices of effective literacy learning and, especially, the role of motivation. Perhaps, then, the emphasis on "fun" in reading, library experiences, and learning generally can be debated and fully validated as a legitimate and effective way to create lifelong readers.

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APPENDIX A**DO CHILDREN'S LIBRARIANS SEE
THEMSELVES AS EDUCATORS?**

Do Children's Librarians see Themselves as Educators?

Benke, Louise

Sent: Monday, March 30, 2015 11:24 AM
To: pubyac@lists.lis.illinois.edu

Hello, Great Brain,

After a lengthy career as a children's librarian, I have gone back to school to learn more about the reading process and the librarian's role in it. Currently I am conducting a qualitative research study on **children's librarians in public libraries**. If this is you, would you be willing to take a survey?

The survey is designed to be the conversation I wish I could have with you about your feelings and opinions on the topic of if/how you as a children's librarian in a public library view yourself as a literacy educator. It should not take more than 30-45 minutes to complete and you are free to be as brief or as lengthy as you wish. Results will be kept anonymous and potential risks to you are minimal. Sorry! No iPad drawings or other remuneration. There is simply the hope that you will enjoy writing down your personal viewpoints and receive satisfaction in knowing your voice is heard and contributing to research about our field. If you wish, results can be shared with you at the end of the study.

The link to take the survey is https://unco.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_cTLOTX511HxcAnz

The survey will remain open **until Monday, April 13**. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you!

Louise F. Benke

Educational Psychology

University of Northern Colorado

Louise.benke@unco.edu

APPENDIX B

**CHILDREN'S LIBRARIANS AS LITERACY
EDUCATORS**

Children's Librarians as Literacy Educators

Q29 CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO Project Title: Children's Librarians As Literacy Educators Researchers: Louise Benke, Educational Psychology and Lisa Rue, Ph. D., Applied Statistics and Research Methods Phone: 970-222-2128 Email: louise.benke@unco.edu Purpose and Description: The purpose of this study is to examine how children's librarians see their role in literacy education for children and their parents. Data will be collected primarily from open-ended surveys that take approximately 35-45 minutes to complete. They will be completed online by children's librarians who are on library-related listservs, social media sites, or who are acquainted with the researcher Louise Benke and have shared their email addresses. This consent form establishes that as a participant in these surveys and interviews, you are agreeing to the use of your comments in this study. Potential risks in this project are minimal. The questions require the type of information that would be considered normal and usual in the everyday work world of public libraries and should not place the respondents at more than very minimal risk of being embarrassed or uncomfortable, nor should there be any risk to their jobs or personal lives. At the end of the project, we would be happy to share your data with you at your request. When we report data, we will make every effort to keep your contributions anonymous. However, it is not possible to guarantee your anonymity. Data collected and analyzed for this study will be kept in an electronic file which is only accessible by the researchers. Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Q30 Have you read the consent form and do you consent to participate in this study

- ☐ Yes (9)
- ☐ No (10)

Q39 Please type your first and last name below. (This is for the purposes of verifying your consent only. Your name will not be kept with the responses and no participants will be identified in the reporting of the data.)

Q43 Tips for taking this survey: If you want to go back to earlier questions, there is a “back” button at the bottom of each page. Your progress on the survey will be saved if you leave and return to it on the same computer.

Q1 What is the official title of your current job?

Q31 Does this job require a graduate library degree?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ Other (Please explain) (3) _____

Q2 Age

- ☐ 21-30 (1)
- ☐ 31-40 (2)
- ☐ 41-50 (3)
- ☐ 51-60 (4)
- ☐ 61-70 (5)
- ☐ >70 (6)

Q4 Please briefly describe your educational background. (e.g., B.A. major, M.L.A., M.L.I.S., or M.A. majors, other degrees, etc.)

Q5 Please briefly describe other kinds of work you have done besides public library work.

Q6 How long have you worked in libraries?

Q7 Why did you want to work with children in a public library?

Q8 Which of the following are you frequently responsible for in your work? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ a. Storytimes or storytelling programs (1)
- ☐ b. Craft programs for children (2)
- ☐ c. Informational programs for children (3)
- ☐ d. Tours of the library for children or their caregivers (4)
- ☐ e. Presentations to groups of children or caregivers (e.g., up to 2 hrs.) (5)
- ☐ f. Technology or Internet programs for children (6)
- ☐ g. Parent workshops/informational programs (7)
- ☐ h. Day care providers workshops/informational programs (9)
- ☐ i. Readers advisory for children or their caregivers (10)
- ☐ j. Other children-related services or programs (Please describe) (11)

Q9 What are some of the things you enjoy most about presenting in these situations?

Q10 What are some of the things you enjoy least about presenting in these situations?

Q12 Would you say you are "teaching" someone in any of these? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ a. Storytimes or storytelling programs (1)
 - ☐ b. Craft programs for children (2)
 - ☐ c. Informational programs for children (3)
 - ☐ d. Tours of the library for children or their caregivers (4)
 - ☐ e. Presentations to groups of children or their caregivers (e.g., up to 2 hrs.) (5)
 - ☐ f. Technology or Internet programs for children (6)
 - ☐ g. Parent workshops/informational programs (7)
 - ☐ h. Day care providers workshops/informational programs (8)
 - ☐ i. Readers advisory for children or their caregivers (10)
 - ☐ j. Other children-related services or programs (Please describe) (11)
-

Q11 If you checked one or more of the items above, please give an example of your teaching in one of these events.

Q14 Which, if any, of the following descriptors (other than librarian) are you comfortable using in describing your role as you work with children or their parents/caregivers? (Choose as many as apply.)

- ☐ a. Teacher (1)
- ☐ b. Educator (2)
- ☐ c. Instructor (3)
- ☐ d. Information professional (4)
- ☐ e. Literacy specialist/expert (5)
- ☐ f. Trainer (6)
- ☐ g. Coach (7)
- ☐ h. Guide (8)
- ☐ i. Other (9) _____

Q32 List one descriptor you chose that you feel fits very well and tell if you think the public would value your role more or less if you were referred to by that term. Please explain.

Q15 If you purposely avoided some of the descriptors, list one of them you feel strongly about avoiding and say why.

Q16 What do you think the advantages would be if teaching were more clearly defined as part of your role?

Q26 What do you think the disadvantages would be if teaching were more clearly defined as part of your role?

Q18 How prepared do you feel to be a teacher in your library work? Add comments if you would like.

- ☐ a. Very well prepared (1) _____
- ☐ b. Somewhat prepared (2) _____
- ☐ c. Neither prepared or unprepared (3) _____
- ☐ d. Somewhat unprepared (4) _____
- ☐ e. Very unprepared (5) _____

Q40 How well prepared do you feel you know the basics of early literacy skills for infants through preschool in order to share with parents? Add specifics if you would like.

- ☐ a. Very well prepared (1) _____
- ☐ b. Somewhat prepared (2) _____
- ☐ c. Neither prepared or unprepared (3) _____
- ☐ d. Somewhat unprepared (4) _____
- ☐ e. Very unprepared (5) _____

Q41 How well prepared do you feel in the basics of literacy instruction for children in grades Kindergarten through 2nd grade in order to share with parents? Add specifics if you would like.

- ☐ a. Very well prepared (1) _____
- ☐ b. Somewhat prepared (2) _____
- ☐ c. Neither prepared or unprepared (3) _____
- ☐ d. Somewhat unprepared (4) _____
- ☐ e. Very unprepared (5) _____

Q42 How well prepared do you feel in the basics of helping children who struggle with reading in order to help parents who don't understand? Add specifics if you would like.

- ☐ a. Very well prepared (1) _____
- ☐ b. Somewhat prepared (2) _____
- ☐ c. Neither prepared or unprepared (3) _____
- ☐ d. Somewhat unprepared (4) _____
- ☐ e. Very unprepared (5) _____

Q19 If your library offered professional development to help you be better prepared to help parents with their children's literacy skills through teaching/better teaching, what would it include?

Q22 Here's a scenario for you to consider: You are working one evening and a parent approaches you and confides how her 2nd grade son is struggling to read and she doesn't know how to help him. What are some of the ways you might handle this?

Q23 Here's another scenario: A public library recently changed advertisements about their infant storytimes to say "Classes that teach the foundations of reading to infants and toddlers, including letter recognition, rhyme, alliteration, etc." How do you think you would react to this change?

Q37 If you were to describe the best possible future of both education and public libraries, how might the role of children's librarians change in that scenario?

Q25 Thank you for your answers! If you would be willing to talk by phone or Skype for a few follow-up questions as needed, please give your email address here.

APPENDIX C
EMAIL TO SEND TO PUBYAC LISTSERV OR
OTHER LIBRARIAN CONTACTS

Email to send to PUBYAC listserv or other librarian contacts

What does your job title say?

I am a doctoral candidate writing a dissertation on how children's librarians do or do not see themselves as educators. I am trying to find librarians in public libraries who have a position title that specifically reflects an educational role, e.g., job titles that include words such as

- Education
- Educational
- Educator
- Learning
- Teaching
- Teacher
- Instructor
- Instruction
- Curriculum

Do you, or anyone you know, have such a job title? I would be most appreciative if you would contact me at louise.benke@unco.edu no later than July 31. Thank you!

Lu Benke
University of Northern Colorado
School of Educational Psychology

APPENDIX D

**CHILDREN'S LIBRARIANS' SELF-PERCEPTIONS
AS LITERACY EDUCATORS**

CHILDREN'S LIBRARIANS' SELF-PERCEPTIONS AS LITERACY EDUCATORS

Interview Questions for Three to Five Additional Children's Librarians

The interviews will be semi-structured, and the questions related to the research questions. Before proceeding with the interview, I will orally repeat the basics of the consent request:

The purpose of this study is to examine how children's librarians see their role in literacy education for children and their parents. The consent form that was included in the survey you completed established that as a participant in these surveys and interviews, you are agreeing to the use of your comments in this study. Potential risks in this project are minimal. When we report data, we will separate your name from the data and make every effort to keep your contributions confidential. However, it is not possible to guarantee your anonymity.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study, and you may decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Do you have any questions?

Do you give your consent to proceed with the interview?

28. As we begin the interview, please briefly describe your surroundings, especially

things such as the location, the presence of other people and activities nearby, and

anything that would give me a picture of what you are currently experiencing.

29. What is your job title?

30. How long have you been in this job?

31. Can you briefly describe for me your personal path to being in this job?

32. How long has this job had this title?

33. What are the reasons behind this job having an education-related title?

34. Are there other reasons behind this job title having an education-related emphasis

that aren't officially talked about? If yes, can you tell me about them?

35. Are there policy documents such as a strategic plan that are tied to your job's

emphasis?

36. Did the education-related title affect your interest in the job and if so, how?

37. How do parents react to your job title?

38. How do school teachers relate to your job title?

39. What, if any, effect has the education-related title had on other people who interact with you professionally?

40. Do you know of other libraries changing the children's librarians' jobs to be considered more education-related? Please tell me about them.
41. Did graduate library school prepare you for this job?
42. If you could change your job title, what would you change it to and why? What are your thoughts about librarians being educators?
43. Have your thoughts about this changed over time? If yes, tell me about those changes.
44. Tell me about one of your earlier children's librarian positions. What was the title of that job?
45. Did that earlier job involve you being an educator? How?
46. How does the educating you did in your earlier job compare to how you educate in your current job?
47. As you look back on how you answered the survey, do you think the educator role implied by your job title affected your survey answers? Can you give an example?
48. What difference does it make if you consider yourself an educator in your job or not? Would you do your job any differently?
49. Tell me what you understand about informal education and how it relates to your job?
50. What kinds of professional development is most helpful for you in this position?
51. What differences do you see between these terms? (Mention all four up front.)
 - a. Teacher
 - b. Educator
 - c. Informal educator
 - d. Children's librarian
52. Below are some of the fears that other children's librarians have expressed about changes that would happen if they were considered a teacher or educator in their jobs. Have any of these concerns manifested themselves in your current job? If so, how?
 - i. Having to deal with assessments; standardized tests; grading; homework
 - j. Having to discipline children a lot
 - k. Teacher accountability; parents' expectation of my teaching their child to read

- l. Not having the necessary license; content knowledge; best practices;
pedagogy knowledge; preparatory coursework
 - m. Not able to do anything with kids just for fun; reading experiences that are
forced or unhappy
 - n. Current lack of respect for the teaching profession
 - o. Politics of education
 - p. Confusion for the public on the different roles professionals hold in literacy education
53. You mention “fun” several times in your survey responses (and in our conversation now). Can you tell me more about why “fun” is so important in your
work with children and if you think that has anything to say about the learning or
education that is occurring?
54. Is there anything else that you want to share about your job experience in relation
to the public library’s role in literacy education?

APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



Institutional Review Board

DATE: September 7, 2017

TO: James Ereksen, Ph. D.
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1104543-1] Children's Librarians' Self-Perceptions as Literacy Educators
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: September 7, 2017
EXPIRATION DATE: September 7, 2021

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.